Hana to Yume COMICS

NATSUME YUUJINCHOU

MIDORIKAWA Yuki 3

Hana to Yume COMICS

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NATSUME YUUJINCHOU (3)

MIDORIKAWA Yuki

Hakusensha

Hana to Yume COMICS

SUMMARY

Natsume continues to return names to the spirits which were trapped in the "Book of Friends," which he inherited from his grandmother. Then a perfect, black copy of Cat, his bodyguard, appeared, and stole the "Book of Friends" right from Natsume! Natsume follows it, and what does he find...?! The spirit exorcist Natori also appears the third volume of this supernatural story!

■Serialized in LALA■

INTRODUCTION

Ever since he inherited the "Book of Friends," a collection of contracts that lets the owner control spirits, from his grandmother Reiko, Natsume has been giving the spirits back their names. Then a perfect, black copy of Cat, his bodyguard, appeared, and stole the "Book of Friends" right from Natsume! Natsume and Cat run right after it, but what do they find...?!

●MIDORIKAWA Yuki's Works

- Hana to Yume COMICS -

Akaku Saku Koe Vol. 1-3
Atsui Hibi
Hiiro no Isu Vol. 1-3
Hotarubi no Mori E
Natsume Yuujinchou Vol. 1-2

Hana to Yume Comics

NATSUME YUUJINCHOU

CHAPTER 9
MIDORIKAWA YUKI

This is a work of fiction. It is in no way related to any real persons, organizations, or events.

Natsume Yuujinchou (Book of Friends)

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Natsume Yuujinchou

(The Natsume Book of Friends)

Chapter 9

Ever since I was little, I'd sometimes see strange things.
Since it doesn't seem like other people can see them, they're most likely...
What people would call spirits.
AH!
SWSH
WATCH OUT, NATSU-ME!
HM?

Thwack
WHOA, NATSUME FELL OFF THE FENCE!
WAH!
AHHH!
rustle crash rustle
crash
IDIOT, THERE'S A HOUSE OVER THERE!
WHERE'D I HIT THAT THING?
NATSUME, YOU OK?
YEAH.
OUCH... UMMM...
BALL ...
WHERE'S THE BALL ...?
rustle
GOT IT...
THAT FACE ...
WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO BE NATSUME ?

I heard that my late grandmother Reiko...
Also often saw spirits.
DO YOU HAVE THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS?"
!!
Because people thought she was creepy, she eventually began taking out her frustration on spirits.
As proof that the spirits she defeated had become her followers, she wrote down their names on slips of paper.
Those papers were gathered together in the "Book of Friends." If someone holds it and calls one of the names, the spirit is bound to obey them.
BOOK OF FRIENDS
Ever since I inherited it from her,
my days have been filled with returning names to spirits who come for them...
As well as running from spirits who come after the book of friends.
CRAP, IT'S FOLLOWING ME...
SNAP

Hm? A rope?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOK-ING AT?!
NOW, GIVE ME THE BOOK!
!
THUD
grind
AH, LET GO!

rustle
MY, MY. HOW ANNOYING ...
Slip
C-CAT!
WHEN DID YOU GET IN MY BAG ...!
I WAS WORRIED, SO I FOLLOWED YOU. SEEMS YOU'RE TANGLED UP WITH ANOTHER SPIRIT.
Cat here is my self-styled bodyguard.
He's guarding me under the pretext of taking the book when I die, but in reality...
THAT HURTS ...
UGH ...
CA—
... flutter
flutter
And he lives with me as a pet cat.
Since he's in the form of the lucky cat figure he was once sealed inside, people can see him.

I SAID THAT HURTS !!
I WAS TALKING TO YOU, YOU KNOW!
TONK
GIVE ME THE BOOK!
LET GO, THAT HURTS ...!
CAT, HURRY AND DO SOMETHING ...!
GIVE IT, GIVE IT!
UGH!
D-DAMN YOU! I'M GOING TO EAT YOU THE FIRST CHANCE I GET!
Nothing good will come of mingling with spirits.
Since I don't have any relatives, I was passed around until the kind-hearted Fujiwaras took me in.
TAKASHI, YOUR CAT ISN'T HOME YET? HE'LL MISS HIS FOOD.
EH?
TAKASHI, DINNER!
...
REALLY?
HE'S PROBABLY FOUND FOOD SOMEWHERE ELSE.
HE'LL COME BACK WHEN HE GETS HUNGRY.

He hasn't come back to the room yet, either?
CLACK
WELL THEN, THAT'S FINE.
...
MAYBE I HIT HIM TOO HARD ...
POP
SHOCK
AHHH!
rattle
DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT, CAT!
JUST WHERE WERE YOU...
PUMP

HA! BWA HA HA!
..HA–
Hee hee
A black cat why
toddle toddle
toddle
AH!
I guess when does that "what happened" cat" ask?
SST
SST
SST
IT'S NOT COMING OFF WHAT HAPPENED, CAT?
rub rub
rub
TONK
C'MERE AND HELP CLEAN.
GEEZ,
DON'T WALK AROUND WITH DIRTY FEET!
...
...
ARE YOU SULKING BECAUSE I HIT YOU?
WHY AREN'T YOU TALKING, CAT?

ROLL
I'M BACK.
AH, CAT?!
HM... HUH?!
WHO'S THIS BLACK GUY?!
WHAT'S WITH YOU? YOU WERE THE ONE AT FAULT, BACK THEN...
sniff sniff
WHAT, THAT ISN'T YOU?
YOU CAN TELL THAT WITH A GLANCE, YOU DUMMY!
HMPH, A SPIRIT, I KNEW IT.
HM? DON'T WORRY, IT'S RIGHT HERE.
Oh!
IS THE BOOK OF FRIENDS SAFE?!
SWIPE
SO, HE CAME DISGUISED AS YOU... WHAT'S HIS GOAL?
IT'S NOT LIKE THERE ARE LOTS OF CATS WITH HUGE HEADS RUNNING AROUND.

GLOUP
AHHHHHHH!
UH...
GULP
CRASH
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
AH, YOU DUMMY! THIS IS THE SECOND FLOOR...
The book of friends...
Oh crap. The book...

07

こんにちは 緑川です。
遂に 11冊目のコミックスです。初めて手にとってくれた方、長くお付きあいしてくれている方、本当にありがとうございます。

無我夢中で走って参りましたがまだまだ走るつもりでおりますのでぜひお付きあい頂けるよう頑張ります。

夏目も三冊目となりました。応援してくれた皆さま、ありがとうございます。

今回のこの$\frac{1}{4}$は9本あり、毎回マンガについてばかりなので、この巻では08年夏に初めて開いて頂いたサイン会について書いてみました。

・02へつづく

THUD
DAMN BLACK CAT...!
huff
huff
huff
huff
LET'S ...
LET'S LOOK A LITTLE MORE.
IT'S MY DUTY TO PROTECT ALL THE SPIRITS' NAMES.
NOW, CALM DOWN.
IT'S ANNOYING THAT HE TOOK THE BOOK, BUT...
THERE WAS NO ILL-WILL COMING FROM THAT BLACK CAT
THAT'S WHY HE CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD... ANYWAY, I DIDN'T GET THE FEELING THAT HE MEANT TO MISUSE IT
IF WE MAKE TOO MUCH OF A FUSS AND OTHERS FIND OUT THAT WE LOST THE BOOK, WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE
BUT ...
HM, WHAT'S THAT LIGHT?
UP ON THAT MOUNTAIN PATH.
HM?

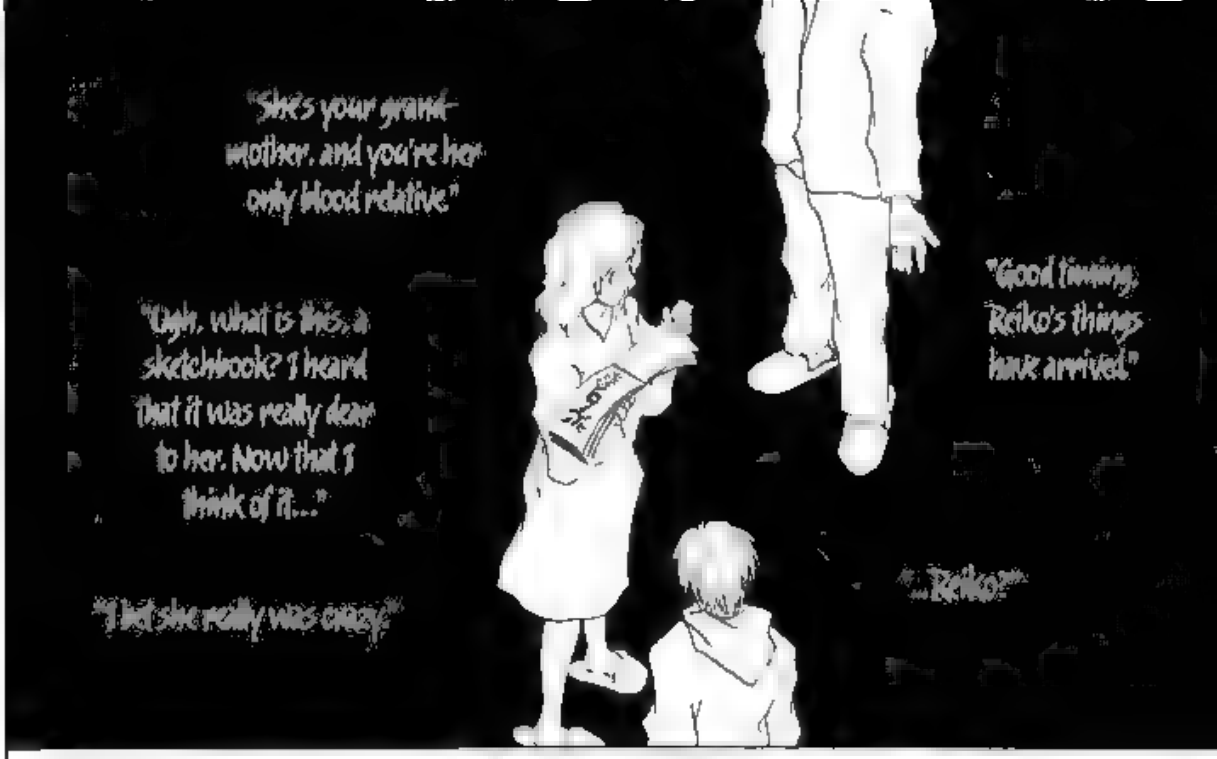
POOF
AW!
I CAN SMELL HUMANS.
WHAT IS IT?
HM?
THERE ARE A BUNCH OF THEM. WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?
WILL O' THE WISPS?
WHOOPS, WE'RE FALLING BEHIND
MAYBE IT WAS MY IMAGINATION. . . NOW IT SMELLS LIKE A BEAST.
A B-BEAST?!
A HIGH-CLASS, POWERFUL SPIRIT LIKE MYSELF...?!
THERE, THERE THANKS TO YOUR BEAST SMELL, THEY PASSED US BY
LONG AGO, THE "MASTER" USED TO RETURN HOME QUITE OFTEN SMELLING OF HUMANS.
DEAL WITH IT. I'M CAMOUFLAGING YOU WITH MY SCENT.
YOU'RE HEAVY, CAT!

THAT'S RIGHT, HE'D DISGUISE HIMSELF AS A HUMAN AND PLAY AROUND IN THE VILLAGE. HE'D OFTEN BRING BACK DELICIOUS SOUVENIRS.
AND THEN. THOSE DESPICABLE HUMANS ..
NOTHING GOOD WILL COME OF MINGLING WITH HUMANS.
YEAH.
"MASTER"?
PHEW, THEY'RE GONE .. ?
OH, MY.
SSST
WITH THOSE LOOKS, YOU'RE MADARA, YES? IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
SSST
Y-YOU'RE... BENIO?
YOU KNOW HER?
KIND OF
EH HEH! NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I SEE YOU, YOU TRULY ARE BEAUTIFUL ...
HMM, A BOY? DID I INTERRUPT YOUR MEAL?
I'D LOVE TO HAVE ANY LEFTOVERS...
HM? I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE SOMEWHERE...

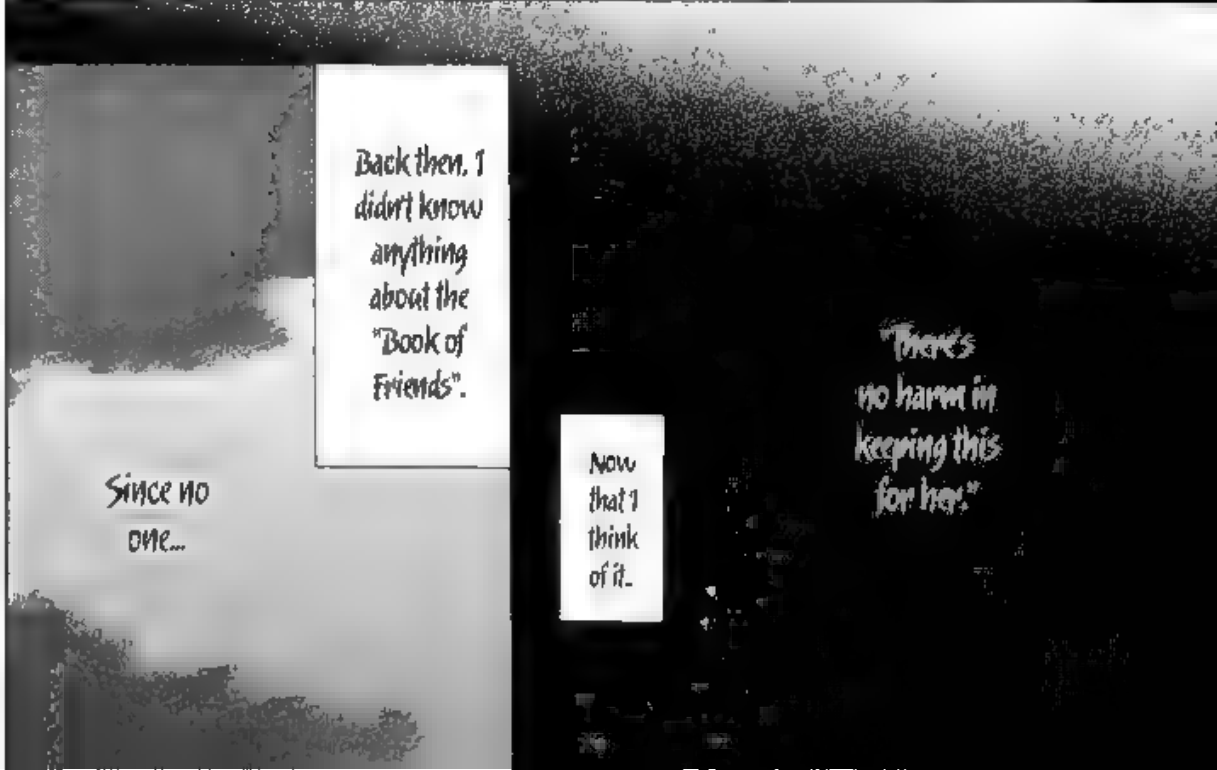
FWAP
GAH, NATSUME REIKO?!
IDIOT, KEEP IT DOWN!
BYA!
HER GRAND-SON, EH
BUT YOU HAVE HER QUICK TEMPER, AHA.
BENIO, HAVE YOU SEEN A CUTE BLACK CAT WITH A SHEAF OF PAPER IN ITS MOUTH AROUND HERE?
A CUTE BLACK CAT? WHAT ABOUT IT?
NO, IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHAT WAS THAT PARADE OF SPIRITS JUST NOW?
THEY'VE GATHERED IN THIS FOREST TO HAVE A PARTY
OH, THAT REMINDS ME...
I SAW AN UGLY BLACK CAT WITH A HUGE HEAD GOING THAT WAY EARLIER.
BENIO, CAN YOU LEAD US THERE?
THAT'S IT!
ARE YOU MAD?
A HUMAN WOULD BE EATEN RIGHT AWAY.
THEN DISGUISE ME AS A SPIRIT!
NATSUME.

IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND THAT CAT, NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES.
BE-TWEEN HIS AU-DACITY AND THE WAY HE TALKS,
HE REALLY DOES RE-SEMBLE REIKO, DOESN'T HE? IS THAT WHY YOU'RE FOND OF HIM?
IDIOT, I'LL EAT YOU IF YOU SAY CRAP LIKE THAT.
EH HEH! I WONDER HOW FAR YOU'L.. GO FOR HIM. HOW INTEREST-ING.
ALL RIGHT, YOUNG NATSUME. FOLLOW ME.
I'LL GIVE YOU A GOOD DISGUISE.
BUT IF YOU'RE DISCOVERED YOU'LL BECOME SNACK FOOD, AND I'LL DIG IN WITH THE REST
THAT'S FINE. PLEASE, LET'S GO.

GYAHHH! MADARA, WHY'D YOU TURN INTO THAT STUMPY THING?!
OH—
COMPACT
QUIT DECIDING THINGS BY YOUR-SELF!
POOF
DO YOUR BEST, CAT.
We aren't going there to drink
The sake's this way—
LIGHH... OH, NO...
ANY-WAY, WE HAVE TO DISGUISE YOUR FACE, NATSUME.
YOU CAN'T GO AS AN ANIMAL, EITHER, MADARA.
HM?
YOU SEE, NATSUME REIKO IS FAMOUS AMONG US SPIRITS.
I'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT A BOY WHO LOOKS LIKE REIKO WITH AN ANIMAL FOLLOWING HIM AROUND HAS THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS".
"Hey..."
"Hey, how long are you planning on looking after that kid?"
"I can't help it, my brother's family doesn't like him either..."
"Ah, w—welcome home, Takashi."


"She's your grandmother, and you're her only blood relative."
"Good timing. Reiko's things have arrived."
"Ugh, what is this, a sketchbook? I heard that it was really dear to her. Now that I think of it..."
"I bet she really was crazy."
"...Reiko?"

"It's not unreasonable, Takashi."
"No one knows anything about her, so..."
BOOK OF FR


Back then, I didn't know anything about the "Book of Friends".
Since no one...
Now that I think of it...
"There's no harm in keeping this for her."

02

※サイン会①

八月の京都で初めてのサイン会を開いて頂きました。
作品のイメージが壊れるかもしれない恐れはあるものの 読者さまに会えるという誘惑に勝てず、嬉々として参加させて頂きました。

お会いしたらどの作品、人物が好きかを聞いてそれの裏話をお返しすることにしようと色々メモに書き出して暗記作業をしつつ、京都駅で担当さまと合流。ホテルに荷物を置いて、年一、二回しか会えない担当さまと早速近くのスターバックスでうちあわせ致しました。
（内容は丁度巻末に入る第十二話についてと）
そして時間が近づき、サイン会のうちあわせとご挨拶のためいよいよふたば書房さまのある京都タワーへ。

HM?
SNIFF SNIFF
YOU...
HEY, HEY! I'M NOT GOING TO DRINK THAT!
LET'S HAVE SOME FUN AND MIX THESE TOGETHER.
WHEN HE TOOK HUMAN FORM ONCE TO HUNT LIVESTOCK, HE GOT CAUGHT IN A FOX TRAP AND A HUNTER SAVED HIM. AFTER THAT...
THE ONE WHO LIKED HUMANS?
"MASTER?"
IT REMINDS ME OF THE MASTER.
STINK OF HUMAN A LITTLE.
SNIFF SNIFF
EH ?
BADUMP
HE DISGUISED HIMSELF AS A HUMAN AND VISITED HIM.
HE WAS ALL EXCITED OVER MAKING A HUMAN FRIEND.
HE WAS REALLY POWERFUL, BUT NOT QUITE RIGHT IN THE HEAD.
MAKING FRIENDS WITH HUMANS, AND ALL...
YEAH, HE WAS KIND OF AN IDIOT. ANYWAY, DRINK UP!
T-THANKS
HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN A BLACK CAT AROUND HERE?
OH, YEAH
I DID, TOO.
R-REALLY?
I SAW IT, TOO. OVER THERE...
EVERY-ONE!

SHOULDN'T WE START DISCUSSING THAT MATTER?
I'VE FINALLY FOUND OUT WHERE THOSE DETESTABLE HUMANS SEALED AWAY OUR MASTER!
NOW'S THE TIME FOR REVENGE!
WE'LL STRIKE TONIGHT!
THE MASTER IS THE ONE WHO GAVE US WEAKLINGS THE POWER TO LIVE IN THIS POISONOUS FOREST!
WE OWE HIM SO MUCH!
VEEAAAHH!
IF WE ATTACK ALL AT ONCE, IT WILL BE CHILD'S PLAY!
THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR THE HUMANS!
?!
TONIGHT ? "DON'T FEAR THE HUMANS "
JUST WHAT'S GOING ON?
WE HAVEN'T SEEN THE MASTER. SINCE HE ATTACKED THEIR LIVESTOCK, THE HUMANS MUST HAVE SEALED HIM AWAY.

WE FINALLY FOUND OUT WHERE.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE UNDER THE FLOOR OF A HOUSE THAT'S NEAR A TALL, RED WALL.
THEN YOU'RE GOING TO ATTACK THE FAM-ILY?!
THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO ATTACK ANY HUMANS.
EVEN SO, DRUNK AS THEY ARE, WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY WILL DO.
GAH-HA HA!
...
AH! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO INTERFERE, NATSUME!
WE CAN'T STOP THIS MANY OF THEM EASILY!
YES, GIVE IT UP
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THESE GUYS, OR WHAT COULD HAPPEN.
AFTER ALL, THERE ISN'T MUCH A HUMAN COULD DO.
...THAT'S TRUE, BUT.
I'M LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO HEAR YOU.
THE SPIRITS HERE AS WELL ...

AND WHAT HUMANS SAY, TOO.
I WON'T SHUT THEM OUT
CAN'T THAT BE A POWER ALL ON ITS OWN?
YOU REALLY AREN'T LIKE REIKO AT AL...
EH?
AH!
THERE IT IS!
PERK
flip
DASH
NATSU-ME!
WAIT UP, YOU!
AH!
I DON'T GET THAT KID.
WHAT EXACTLY MADE YOU LIKE HIM?
IT'S NOT THAT I REALLY LIKE HIM.
I'M INTERESTED IN REIKO'S "BOOK OF FRIENDS"
THEN JUST EAT HIM AND TAKE IT.
THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO KILL TIME.
A HUMAN'S LIFETIME IS TRIVIAL, AFTER ALL.

I GOT HIM, CAT!
?!
JUMP
TOO TRIVIAL, EVEN.
jump
SIT
wiggle wiggle
...THAT BLACK CAT MUST HAVE DONE THIS ON PURPOSE, RIGHT?
ON PURPOSE?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN, BUT, STEALING THE BOOK, AND LEADING US HERE...
swish
LEADING US? BUT WHY?
BENIO, SEARCH IT
pat
I'LL GIVE IT A TRY
I THINK HE MIGHT BE A POWERFUL SPIRIT ...
SEALED INTO THE FORM OF A LUCKY CAT...
THE STRONG INFLUENCE OF THE SEAL HAS LOWERED HIS INTELLIGENCE...
...HM? THIS PRESENCE, I FEEL
Oh!

I GUESS IT WAS POPULAR AROUND HERE TO SEAL SPIRITS INTO LUCKY CAT STATUES...?
THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SEALED. WAS IN A HOUSE NEAR A TALL, RED WALL.
HOW HORRIBLE! THOSE DESPICABLE HUMANS ...!
GAH!
THAT IS THE MASTER'S AURA ...?!
WHAT ?!
maybe their master was free to move about, and returned to this forest...
If the rope I broke back then was a barrier,
...could it have been that?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO TURN YOU BACK ...
C'MON, LET'S TELL EVERYONE!
...OH, SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'M SURE THAT REIKO TOOK THE MASTER'S NAME.
...EH?
NO WAY ...
THEY CAN'T FEEL OUT THAT HE'S A HIGH-CLASS SPIRIT, LIKE I CAN.
THEY AREN'T GOING TO BELIEVE A CAT IS OUR MASTER.

MAYBE HE'LL RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL SELF IF I GIVE THE NAME BACK?
THEN MAYBE HE DOESN'T HAVE THE POWER TO BREAK OUT OF THAT SHELL WITHOUT HIS NAME.
REALLY ?
PLEASE USE YOUR POWER TO STOP EVERYONE!
I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR NAME BACK,
SO . .
BUT HOW WILL YOU GIVE IT BACK? YOU CAN'T SEARCH THE BOOK OF FRIENDS FOR HIS CONTAINER'S PICTURE.
I'LL DO ANYTHING AT ALL, IF IT'S WITHIN MY POWER!
SO...
I'M SORRY, BUT I ONLY KNOW HIM AS "MASTER."
IF WE JUST KNEW HIS REAL NAME...

rustle
LET'S GO, EVERY-ONE!
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GUYS DOING OVER HERE?!
MAYBE ONE OF THEM OUT THERE KNOWS IT.
DOES ANYONE KNOW THE "MASTER'S" NAME?!
WHAT ?!
YOUR MASTER HAS RE-TURNED TO YOU!
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT!
GO?! TO ATTACK THE HUMANS ?!
YOU'RE HUMAN ?!
IF WE KNOW HIS NAME, THEN ...!
!

JUMP
!
SHUT UP! BACK OFF!
LET HIM GO!
DESPI-CABLE HUMAN!
YOUR FACE—
GYA!
Slam
CHATTER
MA-DARA!
I can't get away!
DESPI-CABLE!
A BOY!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
BOY!
A BOY!
CHATTER
CHATTER
One of them has to know the master's name...
EVIL BOY
WE'LL EAT YOU!!
How dare you...
To our master...
How dare you!
Human child
Despicable
If our master were here—
To our master...

LET GO OF...!
THUMP
If... were here...
volt
NATSUME!
FLIP
GYAH!
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
MADARA ...!

DU' N
CL AP
huff
Accept it.
I will return it to you.
"Riou."

SWRL
SWRL
SWRL
SWRL

BECOME
A LIAR

MASTER
...
IT'S THE MASTER
LORD RIOU

I'M BACK, EVERYONE.
...THANK YOU, BOY.
Your memories...
...are pouring into me.

AFTER YOU BROKE THE BARRIER AND I COULD MOVE,
I WENT TO SEE HIM,
MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND.
HOWEVER, HE HAD ALREADY DIED. HUMAN LIFESPANS ARE SO SHORT.

I THINK I UNDERSTOOD WHY EVERYONE CALLED ME A FOOL.
I RETURNED TO THE FOREST, AND FOUND OUT THAT EVERYONE WAS PLANNING TO ATTACK A HUMAN HOUSE FOR ME.
I'M SORRY, NATSUME.
I THOUGHT THAT IF I BROUGHT YOU HERE, YOU'D BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SO I BORROWED THE BOOK OF FRIENDS.
I DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THEM.
AND SO...
I WON'T GO TO THEIR DWELLINGS ANYMORE.
HEH HEH, THAT'S BECAUSE I LIKE HUMANS.
BUT YOU STILL TRIED TO STOP THESE GUYS.
...IT WAS HUMANS WHO SEALED YOU AWAY, RIGHT?

AS LONG AS I'M HERE, THE SPIRITS IN THIS FOREST WON'T ATTACK HUMANS.
I'LL MISS TAKING SOAKS IN A BATHTUB, NATSUME.
FARE-WELL, BOY.
FARE-WELL.

GEEZ...
AND IF YOU THINK BACK, IT'S ALL BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T CAREFUL!
WHAT A MESS THAT WAS.
And like that...
...the case of the double cat came to an end.
URGHH, YOU ACT-ING SO NICE IS JUST CREEPY.
...AND WHY'S BENIO HERE, TOO?
TRUE.
YEAH. YOU REALLY DID SAVE ME THIS TIME.
THANKS, CAT.

Recently, I've been bothered...
And so our usual days continued
WHAT WAS THAT?
PISSED FOR SOME REASON
HE WAS SO CUTE ...
.. THAT BLACK CAT'S GONE.
sigh
By thoughts of my lonely childhood days.
When I was little...
I'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
THAT'S NO GOOD.
I rarely got emotional over anyone.
WELL THEN, MADARA'S INJURY ISN'T SERIOUS, AND I'VE HAD SOME COOKIES TO EAT, SO I'LL BE HEADING BACK.
BENIO.
I DON'T WANT TO STAY TOO LONG.
I DON'T WANT TO WIND UP LIKING HUMANS.

...MADARA, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO WITH ME?
AND HERE I WAS THINKING I'D USE THIS CHANCE TO EAT YOU, FOR MADARA'S SAKE AS WELL.
BUT WITH THE MASTER BACKING YOU, THAT WON'T DO.
NO, I'LL STAY...
...until this trivial span of time has ended...
WITH HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.

夏目友人帳
なつめゆうじんちょう
第十話
だいじゅうわ

EVER SINCE I WAS SMALL I HAVE SOME-TIMES SEEN STRANGE THINGS

AS IT SEEMS OTHER PEOPLE CANNOT SEE THEM THEY ARE MOST LIKELY

WHAT YOU WOULD CALL AYAKASHI

OOI, NATSUME —

HE'S ALWAYS BY HIMSELF AND HE SEEMS KINDA WEIRD

'NATSUME' RIGHT, HE'S GOT NO FAMILY AND HE JUST MOVED HERE

AH, HEY, HE'S OVER THERE, THAT TRANSFER STUDENT

WE'RE PLAYING SOCCER OVER THERE

YOU COME TOO

OVER HERE

AH

WHAT KIND YOU SAY...

THOSE INJURIES, HOW COME YOU GOT INTO A FIGHT WITH A SIXTH YEAR?

A LIE? WHAT KIND OF LIE?

I WAS CALLED A LIAR

THERE'S SOME THING THERE

.....

EH!? WHAT!? WHERE WHERE!?

A SNAKE?

--- THERE'S NOTHING THERE

WHERE ?

WHAT'S WRONG? HURRY UP

--- SORRY I'M GOING HOME ---

DON'T SAY CREEPY THINGS

ドク ドク

ドク ドク

UWAAAAA!!!

EVERY DAY IS A DAY I SEE AYA KASHI

IT'S MOST LIKELY BECAUSE OF MY BLOOD

...A DREAM OF THE PAST?

はっ

SINCE I INHERITED IT

IT SEEMS MY NOW DECEASED GRAND MOTHER REIKO COULD ALSO SEE AYAKASHI

LICK

I HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY AYAKASHI AND HAD AYAKASHI VISIT ME IN ORDER FOR ME TO RETURN THEIR NAMES

AND MY DAYS HAVE BECOME VERY BUSY

SHE FORCED THE AYAKASHI THAT SHE TORMENTED AND DE-FEATED TO BECOME HER UNDERLINGS BY WRITING THEIR NAMES ON PAPER AS PROOF AND COLLECTED THEM

A REAM OF WRITTEN CON-TRACTS, THE 'BOOK OF FRIENDS'

GY A

NYANKO SENSEI IS MY SELF DECLARED BODY GUARD YOUKAI

WHEN HE ASSUMES THE FORM OF A MANEKI NEKO PEOPLE CAN SEE HIM, AND HE'S LIVING WITH ME AS A PET CAT

I WAS JUST SLEEP WALKING A BIT AND THOUGHT I'D TRY AND EAT YOU

HOW MANY TIMES IS THIS NOW NYANKO SENSEI

I HAVE TO WONDER IF YOU WERE REALLY SLEEP-WALKING

SHIT, NATSUME YOU~

YOU'RE SUCH A FEROCIOUS BRAT

CHE, YOU ALWAYS HAVE A GOOD SIXTH SENSE, I WAS ALMOST THERE ...

TAKASHI KUN, BREAK-FAST

COM ING

WERE YOU JUST

RAWR

HE ONLY OCCA-SIONALLY CO-OPERATES WITH ME

TRUE FORM

IN RETURN FOR PRO-TECTING ME HE'S DECIDED HIMSELF THAT I WILL HAND OVER THE BOOK OF FRIENDS AFTER I DIE

I HAVE NO RELATIVES SO I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PASSED AROUND AND THE PEOPLE WHO THE RECENTLY KIND-TOOK ME HEARTEDIN ARE FUJI WARA COUPLE

TODAY I'VE BOUGHT A WATERMELON SO LOOK FORWARD TO IT OKAY?

IS IT THAT SEASON AL-READY?

YES, THE FIREFLY SEASON

FIRE FLIES HUH, I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM, I'D LIKE TO AT LEAST ONCE

AH, I'D CERTAINLY LOVE TO SHOW YOU BUT ...

GOOD MORNING NEKO-CHAN

LATELY AROUND HERE WE HAVEN'T BEEN SEEING ANY

I WONDER IF PERHAPS THE WATER IS POLLUTED

I'LL ASK MY FRIENDS IF THEY KNOW OF A SPOT, IF THERE'S A LOT WE CAN GO AND CATCH THEM

HAHA THANKYOU BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT QUICKLY

THEY SAY THERE IS THREE TO TWELVE DAYS FOR FIREFLIES, THE PEAK IS VERY SHORT

FIREFLIES ? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY LATELY

THERE ARE SOME LEGENDS ABOUT FIREFLIES AROUND HERE, IT SEEMS LIKE THERE USED TO BE A LOT

I'VE HEARD A RUMOUR THERE WAS A LOT IN A MARSH SOMEWHERE IN THE SEVEN FORESTS

SOME-WHERE IN THE SEVEN FORESTS YOU SAY

NATSUME, WHY ARE YOU SUD-DENLY IN-TERESTED IN FIRE-FLIES...?

HA?

IT'S FOR A DATE ISN'T IT!?

WOMAN! YOU HAVE A WOMAN DON'T YOU !?

WHAT !?

YOU BACK STABBER !!

AHAHA OF COURSE NOT

FILTHY!!

UWA HE'S LAUGHING! HAVE YOU GOT EXTRA!? HOW SHAME-LESS!!

I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THE WARM PEOPLE I HAVE MET IN THIS TOWN HAVE CREEPY THOUGHTS

LIKE I SAID I JUST WANT TO SEE

LIAR, DE-CEIV-ER!!

YOU SEEM RATHER KNOWLEDGE-ABLE ABOUT FIREFLIES SENSEI, WHAT AN UNEXPECTED HOBBY

CUZ THE FIREFLIES' FIRE ATTRACTS FOX FIRE. THAT'S TASTY TO EAT

IT'S HERE, THE ENTRY TO THE SEVEN FORESTS

THE FACT I CAN SEE AYAKASHI IS AN ABSOLUTE SECRET

---AH

---NOW YOU MEN-TION SO DEEP IT... IN THE FOREST YOU CAN'T SENSE ANYTHING LIVING, JUST WHAT IS THIS MARSH...

...MU? IT'S UN-USUALLY QUIET THOUGH ISN'T IT

IT'S TRUE THERE'S A MARSH HERE

ISN'T THE WATER CLEAN TOO

A DEAD BODY!?

!?

DID YOU ALSO COME TO SEE THE FIRE-FLIES ?

WO AH!

S... SORRY, YELLING SO LOUDLY LIKE THAT ...

WHAT, SO HE WAS JUST TAKING A NAP

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

WELL THEY SEEM TO HAVE DECREASED LATELY AS WELL

HAHA, WELL IT'S A BIT EARLY TIME-WISE AND SEASON-WISE FOR FIREFLIES

03

WHAT'S THAT ---

YOU CAN SEE ME EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A HUMAN'S CHILD?

AN AY- AKASHI?

...YOU

IS IT HAUNTING THAT GUY ...?

!!

ガシッ

ガガガ

ズルッ

!!

DEAR DEAR, WHAT AN UNSTABLE HUMAN'S CHILD

... SHE SAVED ME?

THANKS, YOU SAVED ME

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT

WELL, BRING OUT A BOTTLE OF SAKE AND I WON'T HAUNT YOU BOY

YEAH SAKE

UH... ARE YOU YAKUZA OR SOME-THING?

IS IT ALRIGHT? I KIND OF NOTICED, WEREN'T YOU HAUNTING THAT GUY BACK THERE?

HOW RUDE

FRIEND YOU SAY ...

... THAT GUY

HE CAN SEE AYA KASHI ? LIKE ME ...

TO BE EXACT HE USED TO SEE AYA KASHI

HE'S MY FRIEND

FRIE ---!?

HASN'T EVER SINCE

BUT THEN ONE DAY, ALL OF A SUDDEN HE COULD NO LONGER SEE AYAKASHI

I OFTEN TALKED WITH HIM WHEN HE WAS YOUNG. FOR A WHILE WE WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER

BECAME UNABLE TO SEE THEM ---? --- AYAKASHI ---?

THAT KIND OF THING HAPPENS !?

I HEARD A RUMOUR THAT HE'S SOON TO BE MARRIED SO I CAME THINKING I WANTED TO AT LEAST SEE HIS SPECIAL MOMENT

I'VE HEARD THAT POWER DECLINES IN SOME PEOPLE WHEN THEY BECOME ADULTS

...BECOME UNABLE TO SEE THEM--- THERE'S THAT POSSI-BILITY?

I --- I SEE ---

IT'S ONE OF A MASTER AND PET

YOUR OPINIONS ARE THE SAME BUT ---

WHO'S THE OWNER

WE HAD A RELATION-SHIP JUST LIKE YOU TWO

MU, OUR RELATION-SHIP IS NOT ONE OF FRIENDSHIP

MY DAYS OF BEING ABUSED BY YOUKAI COULD END...

I'M GOING TO BED

I'LL JUST BEAR WITH IT FOR A FEW DAYS

SO IT CAME ABOUT THAT I WOULD LOOK AFTER THIS AYAKASHI

WHAT !?

WELL, I WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO A HUMAN'S CHILD AGAIN

THIS MUST BE FATE, I'LL BE IN YOUR CARE UNTIL THE DAY OF THE CEREMONY

...

THERE'S NOTHING GOOD ABOUT BECOM-ING IN-VOLVED WITH AY-AKASHI

CRAP, IT'S PLAINLY GLAR-ING

?

YEAH ... I'M GLOW-ING

... YOU'RE GLOWING

OI SLEEPING ARE YOU, HOW BORING

... OI

GLOW-ING IN THE DARK, WHAT A WEIRD AY-AKASHI

NOW I THINK OF IT I STILL HAVEN'T ASKED HER NAME

KIYO

KIYO

KI

A KIND VOICE WAS ECHOING

THAT NIGHT I DREAMT OF SOME-BODY CALLING

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

OI ARE YOU LISTENING ?

I DREAMT OF SOMEBODY CRYING

TAKASHI KUN, BREAK-FAST, YOU'LL BE LATE ---

I HAD A DREAM

SOME-ONE WAS CALLING 'KIYO, KIYO'

IT WAS A VERY KIND VOICE

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

AH, COULD IT BE KIYO?

A LOWLY AYAKASHI LIKE ME HAS NO NAME

I SEE ---

CALL ME AS YOU LIKE

RELEASED FROM THESE KINDS OF DAYS

THAT PERSON WAS

IF I HAVE THE CHANCE TO MEET HIM AGAIN I'D LIKE TO TRY TALKING TO HIM

THE MARSH AGAIN? DO YOU WANT TO SEE FIRE-FLIES THAT MUCH?

AT LEAST ONCE

HMPH, I'LL TELL YOU, SUCH A FIREFLY IDIOT, A LEGEND

LONG AGO, THE MOUN-TAIN GOD THAT DWELT IN THIS FOREST FELL IN LOVE WITH A HUMAN GIRL

THEY BEGAN TO SECRETLY RENDEZ-VOUS AT MIDNIGHT

AT THAT TIME, IN THE DEEP DARKNESS, THE FIRE-FLIES OF THE MARSH LIT THE NIGHT PATH

AS THANKS, THE MOUN-TAIN GOD CHANGED THE SHORT LIVED FIRE-FLIES INTO AYAKASHI

THE FIRE-FLIES RE-JOICED AND A GREAT NUMBER DE-PARTED FROM THE MARSH

IT IS SAID THAT THE CURRENT FIRE-FLIES OF THIS LAND ARE DE-SCENDED FROM THOSE THAT DECIDED TO REMAIN AS FIRE-FLIES IN THE MARSH

REALLY

WELL IT'S JUST A LEGEND

AH, AS EXPECTED THERE ARE STILL NO FIREFLIES ...

カ" サ"

OI THERE'S A HUMAN TOO

HE MUST BE CAREFREE NOT NOTICING THE AYAKASHI

YOU'RE RIGHT

HM?

SOME THING'S THERE ISN'T IT

--- SOME THING IS THERE

AH

HE'S BEING ATTACKED !!

WOAH !!?

VII

LOOK OUT

どおっ

どおっ

THAT AYAKASHI ISN'T THE TYPE THAT ATTACKS HUMANG

I, I SEE

HUH? THIS GUY IS---

.....

HA

ARE YOU OKAY ?

--- SORRY, I TRIPPED ON A ROCK

THE GUY FROM YESTERDAY

HAHA, SO ENER-GETIC

YEAH ---

CAN HE REALLY NOT SEE THEM ANYMORE ---?

--- UM, THIS MARSH ---

IS THERE... SOME THING IN IT?

BESIDES THE FIREFLIES? DUNNO... THERE'S PROBABLY AT LEAST SOME CARP

OKAY

I

I COULDN'T ASK!! 'COULD YOU SEE AYAKASHI TOO?'... SOME-THING LIKE THAT

SEE YOU ---

IT SEEMS LIKE THE FIREFLIES STILL HAVEN'T COME OUT

COME AGAIN SOME TIME

IF ---

IF HE MET SOMEONE WHO COULD SEE THEM NOW IT WOULD PROBABLY JUST BE ANNOYING

COULD IT BE THAT HE WANTS TO---

IF THAT IS THE CASE

THAT PROBABLY MEANS KIYO TOO

COM-PLETE-LY FORGET EVERY-THING ---

HE

PROB-
ABLY
BE-
LIEVES
HE
WANTS
TO
FORGET
IT

HE COULD SEE AY-AKASHI SO HE WAS THOUGHT OF AS STRANGE BY HIS FAMILY AND THOSE AROUND HIM

I QUIETLY HID AND WATCHED HIM AS HE CAME TO CRY ALONE AT THE MARSH

HE
IS
CALLED
AKIFUMI
SAN

THE FIRST TIME WE MET WAS IN THAT FIREFLY MARSH

'WHO'S THERE!?'

MY BODY GLOWS IN THE DARK

I PANICKED AND HID BUT

BUT ONE DAY HE CAME AT MIDNIGHT

ゴオ

WAIT

WA---
WAIT

OW

AN
AYA
KASHI
HUH

YOU'RE
A
HUMAN'S
CHILD
AREN'T
YOU?

WOULD
YOU
TALK
WITH ME
A BIT?

I'M
INTERESTED
IN HUMANS

I'M NOT
INTERESTED
IN AYAKASHI

BUT

HE CAME
THE NEXT
DAY TOO

'SO AYAKASHI FEEL LIKE THIS'

SOME TIMES WE PLAYED TO GETHER

WE TALKED ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS

WE TALKED AND TALKED

TOUCHED

わしゃ

わしゃ

'YOU'RE RIGHT'

'HA HA'

'IT FEELS NICE'

BUT ONE DAY

I WAS NO LONGER REFLECTED IN HIS EYES

YOU'RE RIGHT ---

HE COULDN'T SEE ME, WHO STOOD RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM

HE CAME TO THE MARSH AND CALLED FOR ME COUNT-LESS TIMES

EVEN IF I WAVED HE COULDN'T SEE ME

ONE DAY YOU ALSO MAY BECOME UNABLE TO SEE

NEVER AGAIN

IF THAT TIME COMES,

ONE DAY HUH

NO NO HASN'T THAT BEEN MY WISH FOR THE LONGEST TIME?

SIGH

HA L

I WON'T BE HAPPY

YES, ALL THIS TIME

GET LOST

LIAR

LIAR

I WAS ALWAYS HOPING FOR THE TIME I WOULD BE FREED...

THE FIRST TIME WE MET WAS

IT SEEMS HE'LL BE MARRIED SOON

HE'S MY FRIEND

AT THAT FIREFLY MARSH

KIYO'S GENTLY GLOW ING FORM

AKIFUMI SAN'S EYES CAN NO LONGER SEE IT

I THOUGHT SHE WANTED TO KNOW

KIYO, WHO CAN NO LONGER ASK THE QUES— TION

DESPITE ALL THAT WHY DOES HE CONTINUE GOING TO THAT PLACE?

YES, AN AYAKASHI I RECENTLY MET TOLD ME YOU ONCE SAW THEM TOO

---I SEE--- YOU CAN ALSO SEE AYAKASHI

I SEE

I SEE

IS IT PAINFUL ?

NO MATTER HOW I SEE IT NOW IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM

BUT YOU KNOW, I BECAME FRIENDS WITH AN AYAKASHI

BE— CAUSE I WAS ALWAYS ALONE

IT WAS PAIN— FUL FOR ME

わーん わーん

I LOVED HER

I STARTED TO LIKE HER

I COULDN'T SAY IT BUT

NEVER AGAIN, SINCE THEN

I COULDN'T SEE AYAKASHI AT ALL

THEN ONE DAY SUDDENLY

UNTIL NOW I HAVE NOT BEEN MARRIED

I DATED MANY WOMEN, BUT I COULD NEVER FORGET HER

AFTER THAT

FINALLY...
I FOUND A GIRL
I COULD LOVE
WITH ALL MY
HEART

A KIND
HEARTED
GIRL

THE
CEREMONY
IS IN
THREE
DAYS

AFTER I
AM
MARRIED
I WILL NO
LONGER

COME TO
THIS
MARSH

AKI-
FUMI
SAN
WENT
HOME
WITH

A GIRL
WHOSE
EYES
WRIN-
KLED
KINDLY
AS SHE
SMILED

AKI-
FUMI
SAN

IT WAS A SMILE OF HAPPINESS

KIYO

IT'S ALREADY DARK, I WILL LIGHT THE NIGHT PATH

KIYO, THAT TALK JUST NOW
...

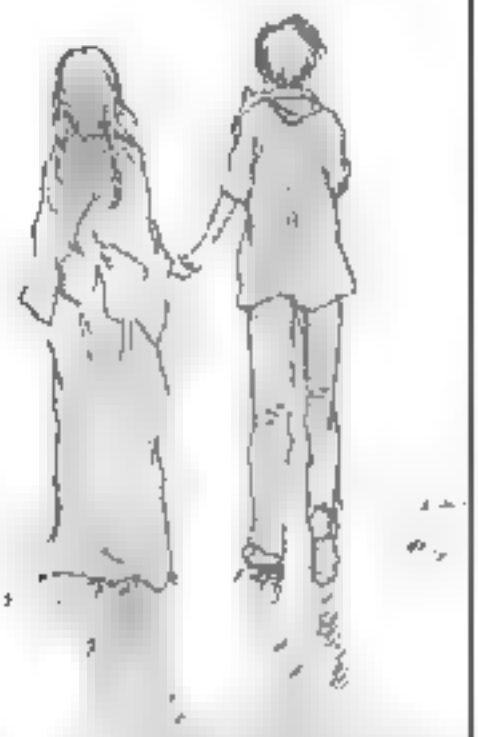
I HEARD, HE FOUND SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO HIM

I'M GLAD

THAT PERSON IS NO LONGER ALONE

...
I'M GLAD

'BECAUSE LIKE FIREFLIES, NOT GODS, HUMAN LIVES ARE FLEETING'



'...SENSEI'

'WHO KNOWS'

'NYANKO-SENSEI'

'DID IT GO WELL BETWEEN THE MOUNTAIN GOD AND HIS LOVER THAT THE FIREFLIES WATCHED OVER?'

THAT NIGHT, I SAW A PEACE-FUL DREAM

...
IT WAS PROBABLY MEMORIES FLOWING TO ME FROM KIYO

PLEASE COME OUT

ARE YOU HIDING!?

WHERE ARE YOU !?

TO MY SIDE

PLEASE COME I CAN'T OUT, SEE HOTARU

HOTA RU!

T/N: HOTARU MEANS FIREFLY

SU KI YO

KI ---

SU KI

--- PLEASE COME OUT

DO YOU HATE ME?

LOVE

HEAR ME

I LOVE YOU

--- KI YO

T/N: BASICALLY WHAT HAPPENED IS IN HIS FIRST DREAM NATSUME HEARD 'KIYO' AND THOUGHT IT WAS HER NAME. WHAT HE WAS HEARING WAS THE END OF 'SUKI YO' (I LOVE YOU)

I LOVE YOU ---

... KIYO

I AM NOT AKIFUMI SAN

THAT PERSON GAVE IT TO YOU

THAT'S YOUR NAME ISN'T IT

'HOTARU'

BUT I CAN SEE YOU

I CAN HEAR YOU

EVEN SO

I DON'T CARE

EVEN IF I DISAPPEAR

IF YOU DO THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TURN BACK

SEN SEI ---

I'VE HEARD YOUR LIFE WILL END IN THE LIFESPAN OF AN INSECT

I AM A FIREFLY AYA KASHI

I DON'T HAVE A SOLID FORM BUT JUST ONCE

I WANT TO RETURN TO THE FORM OF A FIREFLY

THAT PERSON HAS FINALLY SMILED

SO AT LEAST JUST ONE MORE TIME

ITS FINE IF IT IS AS AN INSECT

I WANT TO MEET HIM

ポウ…

HOTA RU

WAIT

MU

HOTARU

WAI

THEN THAT'S BAD

---THAT'S PROB-ABLY THE CASE

OI SHE'S PROBABLY HEADED FOR THE MARSH

ガサ
ガサ
ガサ
ガサ
ガサ
ガサ

HOTARU
WHERE ARE YOU

HA
HA
HA

THE AYAKASHI IN THE MARSH DOESN'T ATTACK HUMANS IT EATS FIRE FLIES

THAT GUY'S BEEN GOING AROUND EATING THEM SO ALL THE FIREFLIES AROUND HERE ARE HIDING SOME-WHERE

WHAT !?

CRAP, IT'S DARK AND I CAN'T SEE WELL

TSK

YOU'RE ANNOY ING

GET ON

SENSEI !

TO THE MARSH!

あ、

OH NO, HOTARU'S GOING TO BE EATEN ---!!

THERE IT IS, THAT AYAKASHI ---

STOP!!

はらん

ばらん

ばらん

ば

THEN HOTARU IS---

SURELY FINE, AND WENT TO SEE ---

...

HAHA, THE FIREFLY STOPPED ON YOU AKIFUMI SAN --- OH

HOW PRETTY ---

YES, VERY PRETTY !

ALMOST AS IF ...

AH

WAI ---

HOTARU
SOME DAY
A DAY MAY
COME

HOTARU

WHEN I TOO
LOSE THIS

WHEN MY
COMPLICATED
DAYS WILL

HA

HA

HA

A DAY
MEETINGS
BECOME
ONE-SIDED

HA

THAT
MIGHT TO
ME BE A
RELEASE

OR

HOTARU
?

FAREWELL, HOTARU

I SENSE THAT IF YOU LISTENED CLOSELY A TINY FIREFLY

WHISPERED SOMETHING

BUT THEY WERE THE WORDS OF AN INSECT, NOT AN AYAKASHI, AND I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND

HE MAY HAVE UNDERSTOOD

THE WORDS OF A FIREFLY

ONLY HE COULD

HE LOOKS HAPPY

HOTARU MIGHT BE WATCHING SOMEWHERE TOO

YOU'RE AN IDIOT

YOU HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO DO SOME THING ABOUT EVERY THING

.....

SIGH

BEING··· ABLE TO SEE BUT UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING IS HARD

FOR EXAMPLE IF ONE DAY

LET ME TELL YOU NATSUME

AYAKASHI AND HUMANS ARE AFTER ALL DIFFERENT CREATURES

THE THINGS CALLED AY-AKASHI DISAP-PEAR

EVEN IF YOU BECOME UNABLE TO SEE I WON'T RUN AWAY UNTIL I GET THE BOOK OF FRIENDS

WILL NEVER LEAVE

THE MEMORIES OF OUR MEETINGS

THAT'S AT LEAST

SOMETHING

ACT THE PART OF A BODYGUARD PLEASE, SENSEI

THEN DON'T FORGET YOUR PROMISE

THIS SCANLATION BROUGHT TO YOU BY
ASHITAKA X TAIYOU SCANS

CLEANER-
TAIYOUCHAN

TRANSLATOR-
TAIYOUCHAN

TYPESETTER-
TAIYOUCHAN

PLEASE SUPPORT MIDORIKAWA YUKI AND
PURCHASE THE MANGA WHEN AVAILABLE IN
YOUR COUNTRY

夏目友人帳
なつめゆうじんちょう
第十一話
だいじゅういちわ

EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I'D SOMETIMES SEE STRANGE THINGS.
AND IT TURNS OUT OTHERS AREN'T ABLE TO SEE THEM, SO THEY ARE MOST LIKELY....
WHAT YOU WOULD CALL... SPIRITS.

NATSUME-KUN, YOU DROPPED THIS!
OH, THANK YOU.
B-BYE...
DID YOU SEE THAT? THAT GIRL'S FACE WAS BRIGHT RED!
YOU PRETTY TYPE BOYS ARE ALL CRIMINALS, YOU ARE.
...PRETTY TYPE? I'VE NEVER BEEN CALLED THAT BEFORE.
LIAR!!
WHAT? SERIOUSLY?
Shit, I'm definitely going to be the first to get a girl!
WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GO TO?
Hold your horses...
HM?
IT'S NOT REALLY IMPOR-TANT ...
I DIDN'T REALLY TALK TO ANYONE.
I REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST MOVED HERE, NO ONE REALLY SPOKE TO YOU.

THEY PROBABLY BECAME THAT WAY BECAUSE I'VE BEEN SURROUNDED BY SUCH KIND PEOPLE.
Lately, your eyes have become gentler, Natsume.
See ya!
THE ONES WHO TOOK ME IN WHEN I HAD NO PLACE TO GO ...
WERE THE KIND-HEARTED FUJIWARAS.
MY DECEASED GRANDMOTHER, REIKO, COULD ALSO SEE SPIRITS.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE DONE NOTHING BUT TAKE SINCE I CAME.
I... I WONDER IF I CAN BECOME SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP OTHERS.
sigh
YOUR DEFENSES ARE WIDE OPEN, NATSUME.
EVER SINCE I INHERITED IT, MY DAYS OF BEING TARGETED BY THOSE SPIRITS BEGAN...
USING HER STRONG SPIRITUAL POWERS, SHE FORCED THE SPIRITS WHOM HAD BEEN DEFEATED IN GAMES TO BECOME HER SERVANTS. THEIR NAMES WERE WRITTEN DOWN ON A PAPER AND THESE CONTRACTS WHICH SHE COLLECTED WERE COMPILED INTO A BOOK SHE CALLED "THE BOOK OF FRIENDS."
SHE WAS CALLED CREEPY, AND WAS ALWAYS ALONE. BECAUSE OF THIS, SHE GOT MAD AT THE SPIRITS.

GEEZ, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION?
ヒラ
Wah! Pig-cat!
I WAS THINKING THAT, BUT IT'S JUST NYANKO-SENSEI.
THE ABILITY TO SEE SPIRITS ISN'T USEFUL TO ANYONE.
WHAT ARE YOU SULKING ABOUT?
AS YOUR BODYGUARD, IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY LIVES I HAVE, THEY STILL WON'T BE ENOUGH I'LL NEED TO RECEIVE SOMETHING OF APPROPRIATE VALUE.
NYANKO-SENSEI IS MY SELF-APPOINTED GUARDIAN.
ヒラ
SO HE'S LIVING WITH ME AS MY PET CAT
WHEN HE TAKES ON HIS *YORISHRO FORM, OTHER PEOPLE CAN SEE HIM
*Yorishiro is an object that can act as a container for a spirit or god.
ヒラ
A BUTTER-FLY?
ヒラ
ヒラ
WHAT'S WITH THIS BUTTERFLY? IT'S FLYING AT ME STRANGELY ...
FWIP!
ヒラ...
ばレっ

What is this?
A PAPER DOLL ...?
SOMEONE CAST A JUTSU ON THAT PAPER DOLL TO MAKE IT FLY.
JUTSU !?
Hot!!
Hello!

HEY!
LONG TIME NO SEE, NATSUME.
NA-
NATORI-SAN.
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SENT THIS THING?
WAS THERE REALLY A NEED TO SEARCH? ANY NORMAL STUDENT WOULD BE AT SCHOOL ON A WEEKDAY!
PLUS, YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE!
Ahaha, that's right!
コゲ...
NATORI-SAN, WHO I RECENTLY MET, CAN ALSO SEE SPIRITS.
WHAT'S MORE IS HE RUNS A SHADY EXORCISM BUSINESS ON THE SIDE.
YOUR SPIRITUAL POWERS ARE STRONG AS ALWAYS. I WANTED TO LOOK FOR YOU. THAT'S WHY I SENT A PAPER DOLL TO FIND YOU, BUT...
IT INCINERATED BECAUSE OF YOUR POWERS. I ONLY MEANT FOR IT TO WAVE.
HUH?

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU NEED?
AND ON THE SURFACE HE. .
YES, THAT'S WHY I CAME.
MAY I INTRUDE UPON YOUR HOUSEHOLD?
SEEMS TO BE NATORI SHUUICHI, AN UP AND COMING ACTOR.
キャー
I'M HO- ... .
DOES HE REALLY UNDERSTAND ...?
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WE'RE NOT REALLY ALL THAT CLOSE.
THE FACT THAT I CAN SEE SPIRITS IS A SECRET.
AL- RIGHT?
ROGER.

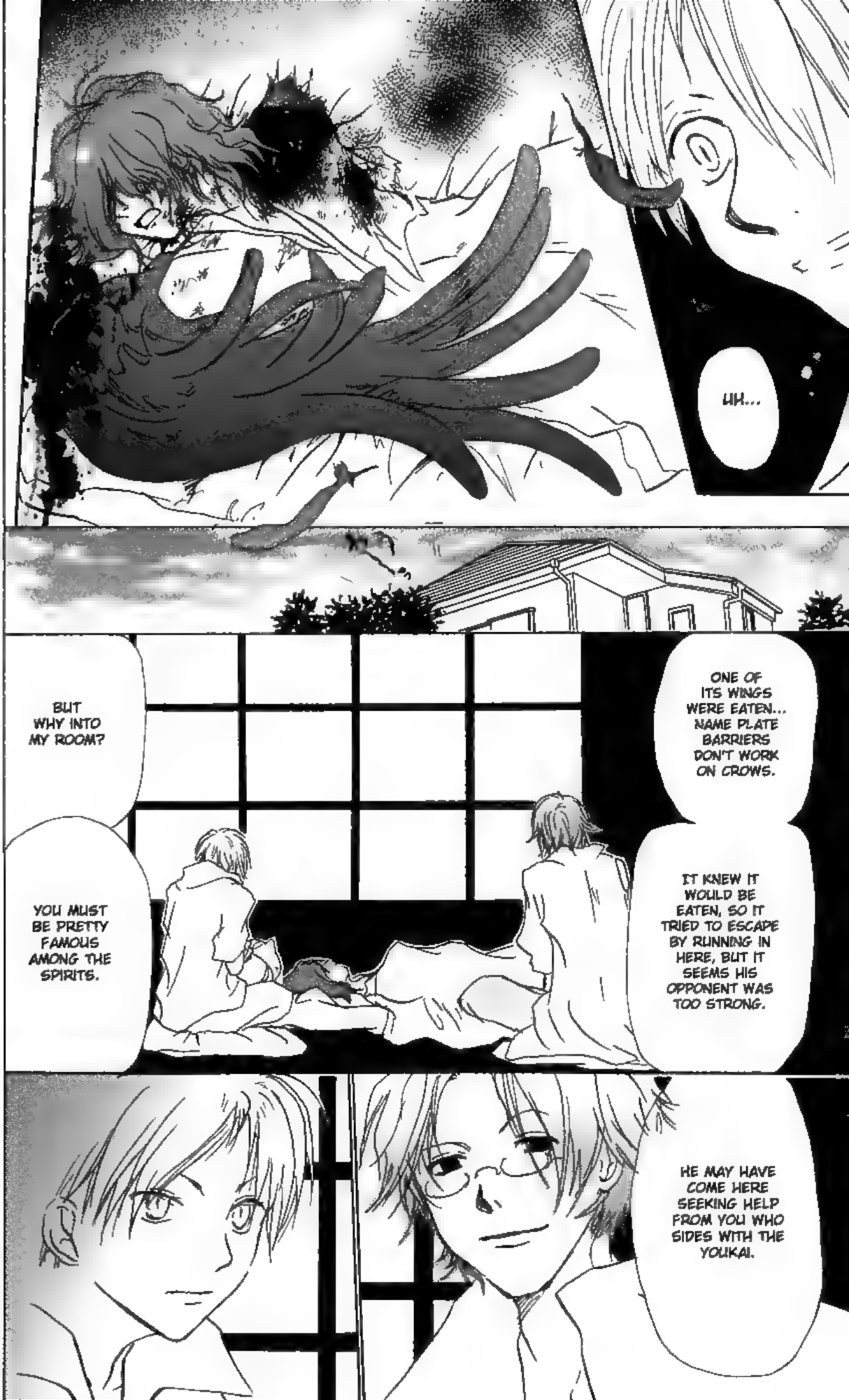
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN!?
TOUKO-SAN!?
!!
BLOOD?
!
WHAT!?
!!
AH!
WELCOME HOME, TAKASHI-KUN.
!
TO... TOUKO-SAN...

I'M TAKASHI-KUN'S FRIEND, NATORI.
SHE CAN'T SEE THIS BLOOD...?
OH, DO COME IN.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOUR FACE IS PALE...
OH, A GUEST?
I'LL BRING YOU SOME TEA.
SORRY FOR INTRU-DING.
PLEASE DON'T TROUBLE YOUR-SELF.
THIS IS ...
THE BLOOD OF A SPIRIT.
IT LEADS TO YOUR ROOM.
HMMM ....
WHAT IS IT?

...IT LEADS TO THE CLOSET ...
PLEASE STOP THAT!
THERE'S AN OLD STORY ABOUT OPENING A SLIDING DOOR, AND FINDING A GIANT FACE THAT FILLS THE WHOLE FRAME.
...I'M OPENING IT.
ハァ
ハァ
ズズ...
HA.
ビュッ!
WHA!?
IT RAN ...
!
THAT ...
LOOKS LIKE HE WAS TRYING TO EAT SOMETHING, BUT...
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT!?

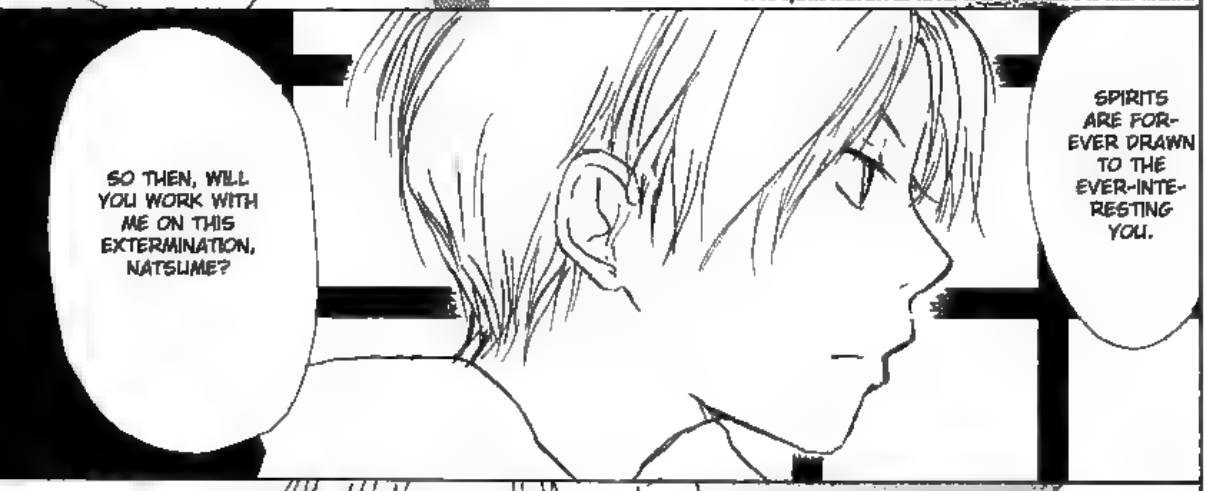
IT'S BEST THAT YOU DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.
HAVING A NAME PLATE ON YOUR GATE MERELY CREATES BARRIERS AGAINST OUTSIDERS.
BEING ABLE TO ENTER MEANS IT'S EITHER A SMALL HARMLESS ONE, A QUICK ONE THAT HAD FOUND AN OPENING...
SO... WHAT'S THIS CAT BEEN DOING!?
PLEASE, KEEP GOING.
Letting something like that in!
IDIOT, I'M HAUNTING HIM!
PROTECTING THE HOUSEHOLD IS AN AMATEUR'S JOB.
LISTEN UP, *TAMA-CHAN, BEING A LUCKY CAT
DOESN'T ONLY MEAN THEY BRING GOOD LUCK. THEY'VE BECOME NOBLE CREATURES THAT BRING BOTH FORTUNE AND SAFETY TO THE HOUSEHOLD.
DON'T BE FOOLED BY MY PRETTY EXTERIOR. DIDN'T I SAY I'M NOT A REAL CAT!?
WOAH, IT REALLY DOES LEAD TO MY ROOM...

...IT LEADS TO THE CLOSET ...
THERE'S AN OLD STORY ABOUT OPENING A SLIDING DOOR, AND FINDING A GIANT FACE THAT FILLS THE ENTIRE FRAME.
PLEASE STOP THAT!
...I'M OPENING IT.
ガタ
スス...
HA.
ビュッ!
WHA!?
IT RAN ...
!
THAT ...
LOOKS LIKE HE WAS TRYING TO EAT SOMETHING, BUT...
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT!?


UH...
ONE OF ITS WINGS WERE EATEN... NAME PLATE BARRIERS DON'T WORK ON CROWS.
IT KNEW IT WOULD BE EATEN, SO IT TRIED TO ESCAPE BY RUNNING IN HERE, BUT IT SEEMS HIS OPPONENT WAS TOO STRONG.
BUT WHY INTO MY ROOM?
YOU MUST BE PRETTY FAMOUS AMONG THE SPIRITS.
HE MAY HAVE COME HERE SEEKING HELP FROM YOU WHO SIDES WITH THE YOUKAI.

THE SPIRITS WOULD BE DRAWN TO THE EVER-INTERESTING YOU.
WHEN I SENT MY *SHIKI TO LOOK FOR IT, THEY SAID IT WAS AROUND HERE, SO I CAME TO SEE IF YOU KNEW ANYTHING.
THE REASON I CAME HERE WAS TO LOOK FOR THE MONSTER WE JUST SAW, SO THAT I COULD EXTERMINATE IT.
... YOU'RE AMAZING.

*T/N: Spirits that act as servants and guardians to their holders.



要退治!!
賞金有
I WON'T ASK YOU TO DO IT FOR FREE. PRIZE MONEY HAS BEEN OFFERED FOR THIS EXTERMINATION.
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO NEED YOUR HELP. THEY NEED YOU!
THAT MONSTER HAS BEEN DEVOURING SPIRITS FROM AROUND HERE, BUT LATELY, IT HAS BEGAN TO ATTACK LIVESTOCK.
WILL YOU ALLOW IT TO CONTINUE SO? YOU HAVE POWER.
.....

P-PRIZE MONEY!?
W-What do you mean!?
How much!? How much is it!?
HAHA, ARE YOU INTERESTED? ALRIGHT, LETS GO TO THE MEETING TOGETHER.
MEETING?
RIGHT.
THE *JUJUTSUSHI'S MEETING.
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, COME HERE TOMORROW EVENING.
Master, it's time.
The Ichihara assembly members are waiting.
ALRIGHT THEN, I'M GOING BACK. I'M NOT IDLY SAYING THIS, BUT...

*T/N: Jujutsushi is a person who uses jujutsu, basically like a mage or a spellcaster.

IN THIS LAND FILLED WITH SPIRITS, IT ISN'T UNUSUAL FOR USERS OF SPIRITUAL POWER TO GATHER TOGETHER FROM TIME TO TIME.
FOR THOSE WHO CAN ONLY SENSE THEM, AND FOR THOSE WHO CAN ACTUALLY SEE THEM
WH-
WHAT!?
IS THAT KIND OF THING POSSIBLE !?

BEING ABLE TO SEE THEM, I CAN'T HELP BUT HAVE DOUBTS.
IT IS UNDER-STANDABLE FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO SEE THEM TO BE MINDFUL.
THAT'S JUST HOW PEOPLE ARE.
THAT'S WHY REIKO HATED THEM - HUMANS AND SPIRITS ALIKE.
REIKO-SAN, WHO WAS ALWAYS ALONE...
A MEETING HUH...?
IF I GO THERE, I MIGHT MEET PEOPLE LIKE ME.
PERHAPS... IF I AM AMONG THOSE PEOPLE, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND SOMETHING I CAN DO.
I'M SURE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HERE....
IS IT THIS WAY, THE DRINKING PARTY?
IT'S A MEE-TING.
You're in a good mood, Sensei.
Because it seems that worldly priests are quite the delicacy.
WELCOME, COME ON IN, GUEST!

I SEE, MAKING A SPIRIT GUIDE THE WAY ENSURES PEOPLE WHO CAN'T SEE THEM DON'T SHOW UP.
THIS PLACE HAS CHANGED TOO, DESPITE HAVING ONCE BEEN RULED BY LARGER SPIRITS WHICH HUNTED DOWN HUMANS.
THE ENTRANCE IS THIS WAY.
BOY, WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE IN THIS FOREST?
HUNTED DOWN ...
COULD IT BE YOU'RE HEADING TO THE MEETING? SO ARE WE.
DON'T TOUCH HIM.
UM, AH...
COME THIS WAY THEN, LET'S GO TOGETHER.

NATORI-SAN.
GYAH!
OH, IT'S YOUNG MASTER NATORI! I WASN'T THINKING OF EATING HIM OR ANYTHING.
IF YOU TOUCH THAT BOY, THE CAT WILL EAT YOU.
GINJI AIKAWA.
WELL, NOW WE'LL TAKE OUR LEAVE.
YES, HE WANTS TO SEE THE NEW SHIKI YOU CAUGHT.
THE FACT THAT YOU TWO ARE HERE MEANS MOTOBA-SAN CAME, RIGHT?
DEAR DEAR.... AS I THOUGHT, BRINGING YOU ALONG WAS A BAD IDEA.
HE MEANS HIIRA-GI, THE ONE YOU SAVED BEFORE.
WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW... A 'NEW SHIKI'?

HI THERE!
.....
HIIRAGI IS...
...A SPRIT THAT NATORI-SAN ONCE TRIED TO EX-TERMINATE, BUT I INTERRUP-TED HIM. AT THE MOMENT, SHE'S HIS SERVANT.
EVEN THOUGH I WANTED HER TO BE FREE, MY POWERS ALWAYS FALL SHORT...
NO GREETING, HUH? DO YOU HATE ME?
...ARE YOU GOING TO THE MEETING TOO?
YES.
...STRIP.
HUH!?
...WHAT?
THEN PUT OUT YOUR ARM.
UHM... SORRY, HIIRAGI, IT WAS A REFLEX.
SMACK!
HURRY UP AND STRIP!
AHH!

05

※サイン会④

もうミスはすまいと慎重に書きつつ読者さまとご挨拶をしました。話したいことや聞かせて頂きたいことがたくさんあったのに胸いっぱいでほとんどお話できませんでした。けれど本当に感激の連続でした。一生懸命感想を語ってくれる方やお話したいのにお互いモジモジしてしまってうまくお話できなかった方、面白いマンガを描くことを目指している同志の方、友人・恋人・親子同士で来てくださった方、京都や近郊、遠い地から駆けつけてくださった方など、本当に本当にありがとうございました。
並べずに遠くからでもと見守ってくださった方もありがとうございました。

たくさんの娘さん達に舞いあがりつつ、こっ恥ずかしいだろうに逃げ出さず並んでくれた男性も数人いらっしゃることに気付いて感激でした。

まさに至福の時でございました。

OH.
WHAT'S WITH THAT KID? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM BEFORE
OI.
I WONDER IF HE'LL TURN UP.
THE LONG NECKED GUY IN FRONT OF SHICHIZUKA WAS..!
RIGHT, THE MONK FROM THE EIGHT FELDS IS REALLY SOMETHING, I NOTICED
OH, I CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE ...
HAHA, THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE SEEING MOSTLY SPIRITS.
IS EVERYONE REALLY... HERE?
...SO MANY!
ISN'T THAT REIKO? NATSUME REIKO?
WHO WAS that, just now?
DO YOU WANT TO WEAR THIS? EVERYONE HERE WANTS INFORMATION, AND IS COLLECTING IT, BUT...
THERE ARE ALSO PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT THEIR BACKGROUNDS KNOWN.
NATSUME-KUN,
YOU'RE FREE TO USE A FALSE NAME.
COULD IT BE THAT YOU LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE AN ACTOR?
IT'S NOT SOMETHING I CAN HIDE EVEN IF I TRIED. I SHINE...
...HOW ABOUT YOU, NATORI-SAN? YOU'RE NOT HIDING YOUR BACKGROUND?

06

※サイン会⑤

と幸せを噛みしめつつもあっという間におわってしまったサイン会でした。
(制限時間は2時間でもっとお話したかったのですが、後ろの方達は2時間も待ってくださったのだなとまたまたじんとしました。)
ほとんど腰をまげたままだった担当様、販売部様にも大感謝でありました。

ありがたいことにお花やお土産、プレゼントやお手紙を持って来てくださる方もいらっしゃいました。手作りのものや素敵なイラストなどもあり、嬉しさにタメ息ばかりが出ました。
熊本へと帰ってお菓子やお茶類は家族や、アシスタントに来てくださった玉織さん、知華ちゃん達とおいしく頂きました。
本当にありがとうございました。

サイン会会場には私をマンガ家にしてくださった、最初の担当様からもお花が届いていてじんわりきてしまいました。
ご来店、ご協力してくださった方々、ありがとうございました。

UH...
HAHA...
HE DOES NO HARM AND JUST MOVES AROUND, SO I'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT.
SENSEI!
A CREEPY MARK IS UNUSUAL.. AREN'T YOU AFRAID?
NOW, THAT'S CREEPY.
HE NEVER GOES TO MY LEFT LEG...
Left leg?
WHY WOULD THAT BE...?

PEOPLE WERE SAYING YOU GOT A NEW SHIKI, SO I CAME TO SEE.
THAT'S ...
NATORI...
NANASE-SAN.
MY SHIKI USED TO BE DISOBEDIENT, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS DISCARD THE SMALL ONES.
SO I MUST FIND A BETTER ONE SOME-WHERE...
THE USEFUL-NESS OF MY SHIKI HAS ALSO EXPIRED.
HAHA, THE PRESI-DENT HAS FINISHED SEARCHING THE MEETING PLACE,
SAID HE SAW SOME-THING INTERES-TING AND HAS ALREADY GONE HOME.
YOU'RE THE SAME AS ALWAYS... IS MATOBA-SAN HERE TOO?
WHAT IS THAT WOMAN?

NANASE-SAN,
THIS IS MY FRIEND NATSUME-KUN.
AND THAT'S MY SHIKI, HIIRAGI.
AH... MATOBA-SAN IS A VERY FAMOUS EXORCIST.
NANASE-SAN IS HIS SECRETARY.
SOME-THING... INTERES-TING?
... NATORI-SAN?
... NATSUME?
COULD YOU POSSIBLY ...
DO YOU KNOW NATSUME REIKO?
EH?

NATSUME yuujin-chou

TRANSLATOR: TAIYOUCHAN

CLEANER: AMZY

TYPESETTER: QUEENIE

PROOFREADER: MAX

QCER: ANGELWRITER

SCAN PROVIDER: MIHOHO007

Transcendence

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

ASHITAKA X-TAIYOU

GRAND-MOTHER? THEN.. YOU'RE HER GRAND-SON?
DO YOU KNOW MY GRAND-MOTHER?
I'VE MERELY HEARD RUMOURS THAT HAVE ACCUMULATED AMONG THE SPRIITS- THAT SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL AND HAD GREAT STRENGTH..
WELL, I'M AFRAID I DIDN'T KNOW HER THAT WELL.
NO.. SHE PASSED VERY YOUNG.
I SEE..
PASSED.. FROM ILLNESS? AN ACCIDENT? OR..
IS SHE STILL IN GOOD HEALTH?
ぎゅっ

DID A SPIRIT..?
EH?
NO- THAT'S NOT..
YOU'RE HER GRAND-SON, AREN'T YOU? SHOULDN'T YOU KNOW?
HOW DID SHE DIE?
I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I ONLY HEARD THAT SHE DIED UNDER A TREE SOMEWHERE..
.. I'M NOT IN A POSITION WHERE I CAN ASK THAT-
NEVER.. I NEVER HAD ANYONE..
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW?

I SEE.. I'M SORRY. BUT SHE'S NOT FIGHTING ALONE ANYMORE.
I NEVER HAD A HUMUN ASK ABOUT MY GRAND-MOTHER LIKE THIS.
is it really . .
is it really okay..?
WELL THEN, JUST TAKE THINGS SLOWLY.
I HEARD, NATORI, THAT YOU'RE AIMING FOR THE PRIZE MONEY?
HAHA!
YES WELL. THE MONEY'S PART OF IT.
. . for me to trust humans?

IT SEEMS A LOT OF SHIKI WERE EATEN BY THAT THING, SO THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THERE'S PRIZE MONEY.
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE AT A LEVEL AT WHICH YOU CAN EXTERMINATE IT.
YES WELL, EXTERMINATING IT MIGHT BE IMPOSSIBLE BUT I CAN AT LEAST SEAL IT.
DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'RE DESPERATE, NATORI.
I SEE.. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE WITH YOUR POWER.
ILL GIVE YOU THIS MAGIC SEAL POT.
THANKS
THE MOTOBA CLAN MEMBERS ARE RATHER DISAGREE-ABLE AREN'T THEY..
IS THIS ALRIGHT?
AH YES, THEY WERE JUST SURPRISED BY EVERYTHING.
WAS YOUR GRAND-MOTHER ALSO..
A PERSON WHO COULD SEE SPIRITS?
YES.
HA

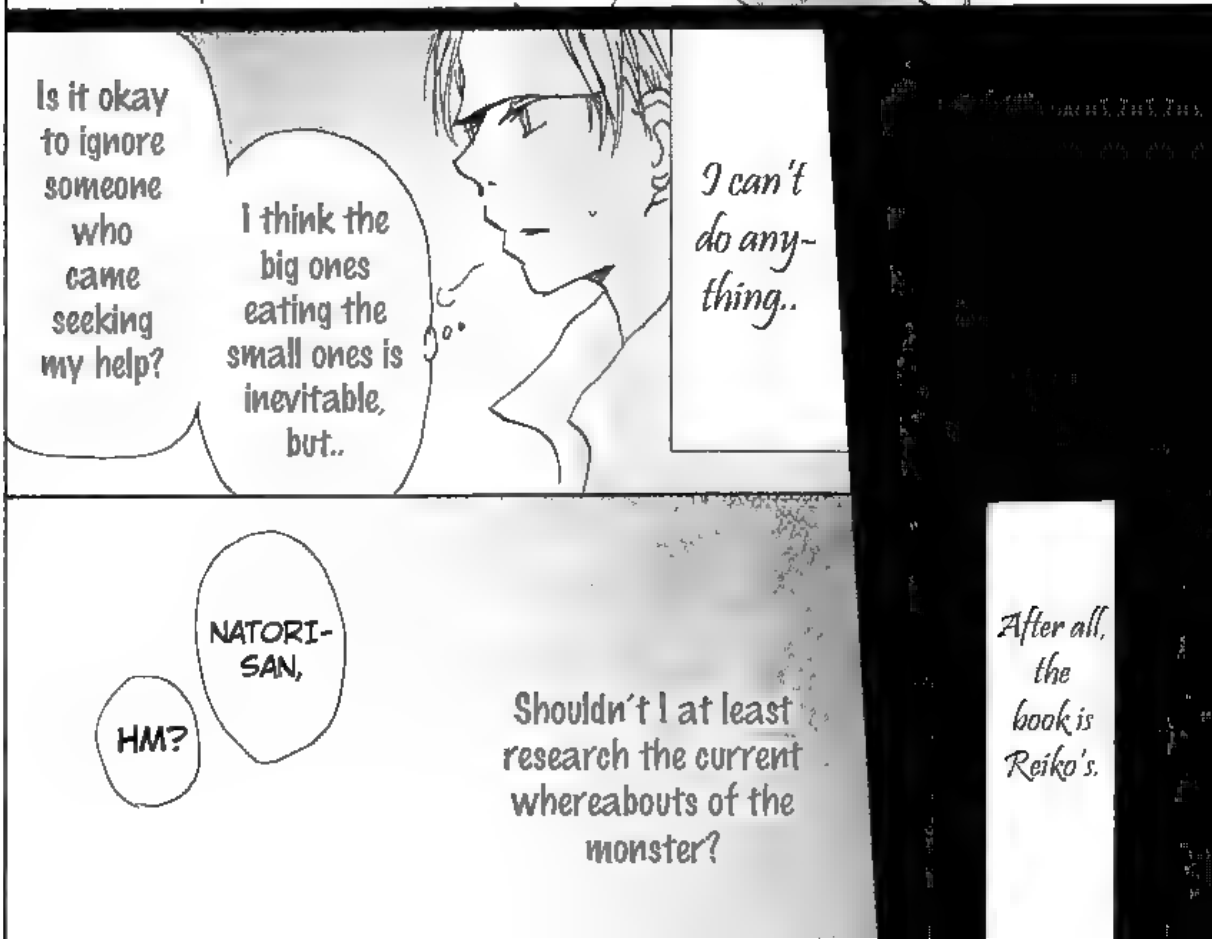
07

※サイン会⑧

サイン会が終わりホテルで少し休憩後、担当さまと京都を散歩してみることに。
移動にはタクシーを使わせて頂いたのですがさすがは観光都市、無線がないことにビックリでした。
どこを走っていてもお寺さんがいるのかと思うと街の活気を感じました。
もう日暮れだったのでほとんどのお寺は門が閉まっていたのですが、街中に古風な佇まいで堂々と在るそれを観るだけで京都に来たのだと感じることが出来ました。
妖怪と縁のあるとても有名な神社には何とかお参り出来ました。
(森や山のなかにあるだろうと勝手に思っていたのでびっくりでした。とても人の生活に近い地に創られていました。)
九州妖怪と本州妖怪には何か違いはあるだろうかと地元の人に色々噂を聞いてみたい欲求に襲われました。

夕方の色も自分が住む街とどこか違って見えて、久しぶりに旅の楽しさを思い出しました。

For the meantime,
She can stay here while her injuries heal but she won't be able to fly anymore with only one wing, Sensei.
That's true. Perhaps there's a name of a healing spirit in the Book of Friends. But..
You won't be able to call it without knowing it's face.
I see..
I suppose you're right.


Is it okay to ignore someone who came seeking my help?
I think the big ones eating the small ones is inevitable, but..
I can't do anything..
NATORI-SAN,
HM?
Shouldn't I at least research the current whereabouts of the monster?
After all, the book is Reiko's.

THAT PAPER DOLL YOU SENT FLYING TO FIND ME THAT TIME..
COULD YOU MAKE IT FIND THE MONSTER?
NO, I DON'T KNOW IT'S NAME, SO THAT IS MOST LIKELY IMPOSSIBLE.
AH, WHAT IF?
THIS PLACE IS OVERFLOWING WITH ENERGY. PERHAPS IF I HAD YOUR POWER,
I COULD SEND ONE OUT.
PLEASE DO!
WAITING ROOM
PUT YOUR HAND ABOVE THAT FORMATION.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, AND CREATE A MENTAL IMAGE OF THE CREATURE
WHILE ORDERING IT TO SEARCH.

PEW
!?
GO!
AH, THE GLASS !
SORRY, I FORGOT TO OPEN THE WINDOW.
EH..
BUT TO BE SUCCESS-FUL ON YOUR FIRST TRY..
SIMPLY SENDING IT OFF IS GREAT, BUT THAT SPEED WAS...
IT CAME BACK?!
HUH?
DID IT FAIL?
NO..

In this building...
PEOPLE WITH STRONG SPIRITUAL POWER ARE A DELICACY, SO IT MIGHT HAVE COME TO EAT THEM.
HII-RAGI,
I'M GOING AHEAD.
How is it?
I have to protect..
Where did it go?
if it's that, I should surely be able to do it!
The people here who know the same pain that I do,
liar!
liar!
I'll protect them!
SHIT, THERE ARE TOO MANY SPIRITS PRESENCES HERE!

OH, NATORI, WHAT'S UP?
IS THAT KID A NEW SHIKI?
NAT-SUME?
BE QUIET!
The paper doll is on the ceiling.

fou..
ポタ.
ポタポタ!
どおん
UWAH, WHAT'S THAT?!
blood?!
!?
IT APPEARED!
!
fuu

UWAH!
That is...
Hiiragi's lost sword.
STOP!
I'll protect them!
YOU!
WHA-
Y-
!

GYAH!
GYAH!
I-
IT RAN AWAY!
OI! ARE YOU OKAY?
SEN-SEI!
TSK!
I'M FOLLOW-ING IT, IDIOT!

ビュッ
TO DRIVE AWAY THAT MONSTER WITH A SINGLE FIST- !!
NATORI, WHO IN THE WORLD IS THAT CHILD?!
A HUGE SHIKI LIKE THAT...
WHAT'S THAT?
NATORI, THAT BOY!
DON'T FOLLOW, YOU'LL BE EATEN!
SHE'S NOT AS RECKLESS AS YOU.
YES. THANKS TO HIIRAGI'S SYMBOL.. I WONDER IF SHE'S OKAY...
IS YOUR ARM OKAY?

OKAY.
I'LL TEACH YOU HOW, SO RELAX.
ALRIGHT, THE FORMATION IS DONE.
THE TOOLS ARE IMPROVISED TOO, BUT..
IT'S COMING!
SENSI IS DRIVING IT THIS WAY.
I COMMAND YOU!
COME FORTH.

CAPTURE
PROTECTORS OF AARK-NESS
どん
どん
ヒュー
ヒュー
GYAH!
しゅる
しゅる
ズザザザ

しゅうううう…
ぎゅっ
どぉおっ
YE-
YES!
THE-
THE LID!
!
<SFX: GYUU>
しん…
!
I..
IT'S OVER.
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE SUCCEE -DED
…
ぐるんっ
どさっ
YOU FOOLS! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF I GOT SUCKED IN TOO!

And with that, our plan to capture the monster ended.
I'M SORRY, NATSUME.
I THOUGHT YOU'D UNDERSTAND YOU WEREN'T ALONE IF YOU CAME HERE, SO I BROUGHT YOU.
IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF THE IDENTITIES OF PEOPLE WITH POWERS LIKE YOURS REMAIN UNKNOWN.
NATORI-SAN,
NATSUME, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HASSELED BY, BUT..
HUMANS AREN'T STRONG BY BEING RECKLESS.
KNOW YOURSELF FIRST.
Myself..
OKAY.

The pot flew away?!
ぱた
ぱたぱた
!?
にゃうっ
は、
OH, GOOD WORK.
SORRY, BUT I'LL BE TAKING THIS.
NAN-ASE-SAN!
!!
I SAID IT, DIDN'T I? I WANT A STRONG SHIKI!
THIS SPIRIT CAUGHT MY EYE.
I THOUGHT I'D USE THAT USELESS CROW AS BAIT TO CATCH IT, BUT IT ESCAPED.
I THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO GIVE UP.
Crow-? Could she mean that...?

DO YOU MEAN YOU USED A SPIRIT, A BIRD THAT WAS YOUR SHIKI, AS BAIT?!
WHAT WILL YOU DO IF I RETURN IT? IF YOU TAKE IT BACK TO THE MEETING, IT WILL BE EXTERMINATED.
HOW COULD YOU! GIVE BACK THAT POT!
IT'S INEVITABLE THAT A MONSTER WHO TRIES TO HARM HUMANS WILL BE EXTERMINATED.
I'LL TRY AND USE IT FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANS.
NATORI, MATOBA WILL PAY THE SUM OF THE PRIZE MONEY. COME TO MY MANSION LATER.
FARE-WELL THEN!
Once..

People who see Spirits are actually opponents, who I cannot allow to know about the Book of Friends...
But perhaps now..
I thought that if I met someone who could see Spirits..
It would be a wonderful thing.
humans who are careful,
immediately look on them opposing them with contempt
and greedy.
liar!
liar!
I know that's how it is.
People are...
NAT-SUME!
ぽん
LET'S GO HOME.

ALRIGHT, LET'S GO.
I only needed to know,
for example, about my self.
I was always learning from Spirits,
probably from humans too.
HM,
THAT WOMAN CAN'T USE IT ANYWAYS.
WHAT?

I want to become strong...

So that I can have many encounters, and discover many things I want to protect.

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NATSUME YUUJINCHOU
CHAPTER 12

夏目友人帳

なつめゆうじんちょう

第十二話

だいじゅうにわ

EVER SINCE I WAS YOUNG, I HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE WEIRD THINGS.

THINGS THAT OTHERS WERE UNABLE TO SEE THEY WERE MOST PROBABLY

WHAT YOU WOULD CALL AYAKASHI

T/N: AYAKASHI = SPIRITS, MONSTERS AND THE LIKE

I'M BACK

WELCOME BACK, TAKASHI-KUN

LOOK, I TRIED MAKING SOME TAIYAKI TODAY.

Wow. they look delicious.

didn't know you can make taiyaki at home.

I got the taiyak pan

Let's try making omelette next time~

EVEN THOUGH I WAS PASSED AROUND MY RELATIVES AS AN UNWANTED BURDEN, THE KIND FUJIWARA COUPLE TOOK ME IN.

DELICIOUS

chew chew

I FOUND YOU...

IN ORDER NOT TO MAKE THEM WORRY, I KEEP MY ABILITY TO SEE AYAKASHI A SECRET.

crawl

slide

PFFF

UWAH!

WH...

EVER SINCE I INHERITED IT, IT'S BEEN CHAOTIC, RETURNING THE NAMES AND SOMETIMES EVEN BEING HUNTED.

SHE FORCED MANY AYAKASHI TO BECOME HER HENCHMEN, AND MADE THEM WRITE THEIR NAMES ON PIECES OF PAPER, WHICH SHE COLLECTED INTO THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS"

BOOK OF FRIENDS

LIKE ME, MY LATE GRANDMOTHER HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE AYAKASHI.

...

SOMETHING TO EAT.

GIVE ME SOME-THING TO EAT

HUN-GRY I'M HUN-GRY

FROM BETWEEN THE TATAMI MATS..

GRY

EH

step step step

HMM?

step

NYAN-KO-SEN-SEI

YOUR FAMILY MADE SOMETHING CALLED TAIYAK TODAY.

OPEN

YO, NATSU-ME, YOU'RE BACK

here Leave after you eat all night?

MY TAIYAKI !!!?

GYA! YOU'RE EATING!!

chew chew chew

NYANKO-SENSEI IS AN AYAKASH. THAT'S LIVING WITH ME AS MY PET CAT

HE'S MY SELF-CLAIMED BODYGUARD IN EXCHANGE FOR THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS" BUT...

RAWR

CURSE YOU, I'LL SWALLOW YOU WHOLE, YOU IMPUDENT FOOL

SIGH, YOU CAN HAVE THIS

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. IN RETURN, I SHALL TELL YOU SOMETHING GOOD.

SENSEI, YOU'RE MY BODYGUARD RIGHT? WHY DID YOU LET SUCH AN AYAKASHI INTO THE HOUSE?

HMM?

YOU IDIOT THAT GUY IS CALLED "HAZAMA" AND MOVES THROUGH NARROW SPACES. IT'S NOT REALLY BIG AND ISN'T ANY DANGER.

IN THE TREE LOCATED IN THE GARDEN OF THIS HOUSE, A BIRD HAS BUILT ITS NEST. TODAY, THEY WILL LEAVE THE NEST

wriggle

wriggle

wriggle

IT'S TRUE THAT THERE'S A BIRD'S NEST

WASN'T IT GOOD? IT'S HEART-WARMING

WAIT UP! WHAT'S WITH THAT PIECE OF USELESS INFORMATION?

3R+GGJW

YOU ONLY THINK OF EATING, DON'T YOU...

ARE WE JUST CHECK-ING OR ARE WE GOING TO EAT IT?

LOOK, IT'S THIS TREE

IT WAS WARMING 5 EGGS. 4 OF THEM HAVE HATCHED BUT...

AH, THERE'S A STRANGER AT THE GATE POST

HMM?

THERE'S NO ONE THERE

EH? I WAS PRETTY SURE THAT...

FU JI WA RA

陸

RIKU

T/N: RIKU MEANS LAND, BUT AN ALTERNATIVE READING OF THE KANJI IS ROKU MEANING "SIX"

08

AUTOGRAPH PARTY 7

WHILE WALKING THROUGH THE STREETS OF KYOTO, I HAD LUNCH WITH MY EDITOR. FROM A ROOFLESS TATAMI ROOM OF THE SHOP, WE COULD SEE THE EXPANSE OF THE RIVER. BECAUSE WE WERE BOTH LACKING IN REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE, WE FOUND IT BREATHTAKING (THE HEAD EDITOR AND THE VETERAN EDITORS HAVE ALREADY BEEN HERE MANY TIMES)

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SUMMER AND THE SUN WAS SETTING, THE BUGS DID NOT GATHER MUCH. WE HAD FUN SURMISING THAT IT WAS PROBABLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE PILLARS WERE MADE OUT OF WOOD THAT THE BUGS HATED. KYOTO CUISINE WAS UNIQUE AND DELICIOUS.

EVEN THOUGH THIS IS MY FIRST PIECE OF WORK WITH THE CURRENT EDITOR, IT WAS THE FIRST VOLUME OF NATSUME YUUJINCHOU AND I WAS GLAD THAT THE AUTOGRAPH PARTY ENDED SUCCESSFULLY. WE DISCUSSED MUCH ABOUT THE PAST, THE FUTURE AND ALSO THE PEOPLE WHO TURNED UP FOR THE AUTOGRAPH PARTY.

I WILL TRY MY BEST TO PRODUCE INTERESTING WORKS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT SO FAR.

chirp

WHO DREW SUCH A GRAFFITI HERE?

DAMN, IT'S NOT COMING OFF

rub rub

THE ONES WHO LEFT

WERE THE TWO PARENTS AND FOUR CHICKS..

TODAY, THEY WILL LEAVE THE NEST

...THE LAST EGG

messy

THOSE DIS-TORTED TAIYAKI ARE...

messy

TA-KA-SHI-KUN

AH

TOU-KO-SAN?

FU FU

IT WAS LEFT BEHIND...

AHAHA, THE STARTING ONES WERE FAILURES..

BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT, I'LL FINISH THEM VERY QUICKLY.

YES, OF COURSE.

THAT'S WHY, MAY I SHARE THOSE WITH YOU?

YES.

WAS IT DELI-CIOUS?

I WONDER WHY

I'M NOT THEIR REAL CHILD

SOME-TIMES

HOW SELF-LESS CAN THEY BE ..

rustle

rustle

I KNEW IT THE PARENTS AREN'T COMING BACK.

YOU'VE BEEN LEFT BEHIND, HAVEN'T YOU?

EVEN THOUGH IT'S STILL WARM...

snooze

snooze

quiet-y

AH, GOOD MORNING, SENSEI. SINCE YOU'RE FREE, COULD YOU WARM IT UP FOR ME?

UWAH! WHAT'S THIS EGG DOING HERE?

HMM?

roll

OVEN EYES

chirp

chirp

WHEN AN EGG IS ABANDONED, IT'S AS GOOD AS DEAD.

WHAT!? ARE YOU AN ABSOLUTE IDIOT!?

I'M LEAV-ING NOW

I'm leaving now

IF IT HATCHES, IT MIGHT BE DELI-CIOUS, SENSEI

I SEE

!

FU JI WA RA

伍

FIVE

T/N: GO = FIVE THIS KANJI IS NORMALLY USED N LEGAL DOCUMENTS ONLY

09

FRONT COVER

I WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF DRAWING THE FRONT COVER OF LaLaDX MAGAZINE, SEP'06 ISSUE.
I WILL DEFINITELY NOT FORGET THE JOY I FELT WHEN I RECEIVED THE CALL FROM MY EDITOR. THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SUPPORTED ME.
IT'S A PIECE THAT'S KIND OF MISSING, SO I SENT 5-6 PIECES.
SINCE THERE WAS NO RESTRICTION ON GENDER, I THOUGHT ABOUT DRAWING REIKO-SAN TOO. THE COVER EDITOR SAID THAT HE WANTED SOMETHING THAT HAD ACTION WITH TEXT IN WARM COLORS, AND I TRIED MY BEST TO ACHIEVE THAT. THOUGH I HAD A ROUGH IDEA OF WHAT WARM COLORS REFERRED TO, I ALSO DID SOME RESEARCH ON IT. I USED COLORS THAT I DON'T NORMALLY DO, AND THE COVER EDITORS WERE REALLY SUPPORTIVE. IT WAS A MEMORABLE PIECE OF WORK.

1/4 END

THE GRAFFITI HAS CHANGED.

WHAT'S THIS?

rustle

JUST LIKE THIS, ON A WHIM,

SENSEI TRIED TO WARM THE EGG.

I'M BACK

damn, I want to get a drink

WHAT IS THIS...

chirp

I'm leaving now..

chirp

AH

STOP THAT

tap

tap

DAMN. WHY ISN'T IT HATCHING?

EH? WAS THE EGG THIS BIG?

T/N. THE KANJI USED IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS TO REPRESENT THE NUMBER 4.

I WONDER IF IT'LL REALLY HATCH

IF

IF IT REALLY HATCHES

IT WAS, SO PITIFUL

IN THAT "EMPTY" NEST, ALL ALONE

AFTER ALL, IT'S STILL WARM.

WHAT NAME SHALL I GIVE IT?

I'M HERE?

SAN

SAN ...?

THREE ...? I SEE! THEY WERE NUMBERS!

YESTERDAY WAS SHI (FOUR) AND TODAY IS SAN (THREE).

RIKU (LAND) WAS ROKU (SIX) GO WAS GO (FIVE). WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE IT SOONER?

I'M BACK ..

FU JI WA RA

SAN

T/N: KANJI USED IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS TO REPRESENT THE NUMBER 3. CAN ALSO BE READ AS "I'M HERE."

COUNT-
DOWN...

TO
WHAT
?

KID
?

SFX: WIND BLOWING

A
HUMAN
CHILD

WHO ARE
YOU TO BE
ABLE TO
SEE THESE
CHARAC-
TERS?

AN
AYA-
KASHI
...

ARE YOU
THE ONE
WHO WROTE
THESE
CHARAC-
TERS?

YOUR MAS-TER

MY MASTER WISHES TO HAVE THAT CHICK. I FINALLY FOUND IT HERE AND WAS COUNTING DOWN TO ITS HATCHING DAY.

EGG... DOES IT MEAN THAT?

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU ARE ONE OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS HERE, AM I RIGHT? DO YOU KNOW OF THE EGG IN THE NEST ON THAT HOLLY TREE?

OF COURSE

TO CON-SUME IT.

IT SEEMS THAT ITS MEAT IS VERY DELI-CIOUS

AND ITS BLOOD CAN GIVE ONE IMMOR-TALITY.

SFX. WIND BLOWING

DASH

I-I'M BACK ...

IT CAN NOT BE THAT SOME-ONE LIKE YOU IS ATTEMP-TING TO KEEP IT FOR HIMSELF, RIGHT, CHILD?

AND IT'S HORN

H-HORN!?

of the chick

HMM, CER-TAIN-LY

SENSEI, JUST NOW THERE WAS A WEIRD AYAKASHI LOOKING FOR THE EGG...

SLAM

AH

flip

THAT USE-LESS

Aw at why I must Going for a drink

Ah, it's definitely grown BIGGER...

Ba-thump

IF I HAND IT OVER

WILL IT BE EATEN THE MOMENT IT'S BORN?

Ba-thump

Ba-thump

THIS EGG IS ALIVE

I'M SORRY FOR THAT AYAKASHI, BUT IT MIGHT BE SOME KIND OF FATE THAT I PICKED UP THIS EGG.

DO YOU WANT TO TRY BEING BORN?

I'm back~

IT'S TRYING TO LIVE

crack

S-SEN-SEI, THE EGG

crack

CHICK! CHICK!

WHAT!?

...AH

crack

TWO DAYS LATER

crack

!!

peep

crack

FLASH

WHAT !!!?

!!!?

chirp

chirp

It's not a chick!

human form!?

IF YOU EAT SOME-THING LIKE THIS, YOU'RE GOING TO SPOIL YOUR STO-MACH.

CAN I EAT IT?

I'll swallow it in one mouthful

kushu

kushu

WARM

WARM

stare

stare

ah! towel towel

ah! the first Bath!

DASH

DASH

DASH

DASH

TA-TSU-MI?

HMM? THE HORN... I SEE IT'S THE CHILD OF AN AYAKASHI CALLED "TATSUMI".

... I SEE SO IF IT SAW SENSEI FIRST, IT WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A LUCKY CAT CHARM?

like this?

IT'S CLOSE TO BOTH BIRDS AND DRAGONS, AND IT'S RELATIVELY RARE BECAUSE IT DOESN'T RAISE IT'S OWN OFF-SPRING THE OFFSPRING TAKES THE FORM OF THE FIRST THING IT SEE I HEARD THAT IF IT GROWS UP TO A CERTAIN POINT, IT WILL TAKE ITS ORIGINAL FORM AND LEAVE

rub rub

WELL, I'M JUST GLAD IT WAS BORN SAFELY.

AH

I WONDER HOW MANY DAYS IT'LL TAKE TO GROW UP

I HEARD THAT IT GROWS PRETTY FAST, BUT I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS.

smile smile smile smile

made from hand-ker-chief

HOW'S TH.S?

drap

Bite

GYA !!?

AH, YOU'LL SPOIL YOUR STO-MACH!!

IT MIGHT JUST FEED ON HUMANS.

I WONDER WHAT IT EATS. IS MILK ALL RIGHT?

I MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOO RASH.

What do you mean by match-stick boy, sensei!

I'm more of your Guardian than this match-stick boy!

How can you be so ungrate-ful!

EVEN THOUGH I SAID I WANTED TO KEEP IT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF A BIRD.

PICKING UP A LIFE BECAUSE I FELT LIKE IT

much less a dragon

THAT'S WHY THE OFF-SPRING TAKES THE FORM OF THE FIRST THING IT SEES.

HUMANS WON'T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND DRAGONS, AND DRAGONS WON'T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HUMANS.

sigh

TATSUMI DON'T RAISE THEIR OWN CHILDREN

WHAT'S WRONG, NATSU-CHAN

"NATSUME IS LYING AGAIN, SAYING THAT HE CAN SEE MONSTERS"

"AGAIN"

IN ORDER TO BE LOVED

BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED RIGHT? BECAUSE

"BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT ACCEPTED BY ANY OF YOUR RELATIVES"

"THE ADULTS SAY THAT YOU'RE LYING BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BE NOTICED."

ah

NATSU-ME!?

NOBODY WANTS TO HELP ANY-ONE WHO SN'T PART OF THEIR FAMILY

AT THAT TIME, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE HURT BY WHAT OTHERS SAID

BUT WHEN I'M DEALING WITH AYA-KASHI, THOSE MEMORIES KEEP COMING BACK TO ME

TSK

Bang

Bang

WAH! NATSU-ME!?

NATSU-ME, WHAT'S WRONG ??

EH

NO-THING

It's not in the bed that I made for it. Could it be that Sensei ate it?

pull!

UWAH

I'M NOT GOING TO BE INFLU-ENCED BY THEM ANY-MORE.

I'm back.

nod nod

YOU WERE BEHIND ME? WHAT'S IS IT? YOU WANT ME TO FOLLOW YOU?

pull!

could it be that it was making a nest?

crawl crawl

pull pull

YOU MADE IT FROM PAPER..

WOW

WHAT'S THIS?

a pot?

I CAN'T JOIN YOU INSIDE THERE.

AH... I'M SORRY

EVEN THOUGH YOU WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE

I'M SORRY..

HEY, SENSEI, STOP THAT!

ah!

stomp stomp

HOW DARE YOU! I WON'T FORGIVE YOU!

GYA! THE ECONOMIC NEWS THAT I WAS READING!

I'M BA-

IF IT WAS THE PARENT BIRD, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENTER THAT NEST.

I'm afraid I might squash it

IT WOULD CRAWL INTO MY FUTON TO SLEEP

IN THE END, THE CHICK DID NOT ENTER THE NEST IT MADE

FROM THE BED I MADE FOR IT

OR FROM BESIDE SENSEI

THERE WAS SOMETHING PRECIOUS INSIDE.

WHEN I ENTERED THAT NEST SECRET-LY

THE CHICK MADE A BIG NEST FOR ME

A FEW DAYS LATER, I DREAMT

HMM?

NYANKO-SENSEI .

stare

shock

OF COURSE IT WOULD GROW BIGGER

smile

smile

A picnic to change mood

Its growing from chick-size to dove-size.

IT'S GET-TING BIG-GER.

IT'S GETTING BIGGER, ISN'T IT?

EVEN THOUGH I WAS THINK-ING OF GIVING IT A NAME

I ALREADY DID. SINCE IT WAS BORN FROM AN EGG (TAMAGO), I'M CALLING IT TAMA-CHAN.

EH!?

WE CAN'T BE TOGE-THER FOR-EVER

I TOLD YOU. ONCE IT GETS BIGGER, IT'LL LEAVE THE NEST

THAT IS TRUE ...

I see. Could it possi-bly...

a spoiled merchan-dise?

EVEN THOUGH IT'S SPOIL-ED MER-CHANDISE, IT'S STILL A "DRAGON"

You idiot!! The early bird gets the worm!!

That's ridicu-lous!! I went a re-trial!!

TAMA-CHAN (TEMP) SLOWLY GREW BIGGER AND BIGGER

YOU'RE GOING TO GROW BIGGER, RIGHT?

IT DION'T TOUCH THE MILK AND HAM AGAIN

IT'S SLEEP ING.

WHAT'S WRONG, TAMA?

AND FOR SOME REASON

SLOWLY BECAME WEAKER.

TA-MA?

YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A REAL DRAGON RIGHT?

I'M BACK

open

A MOUSE !?

AH!

AH

RAT

SFX. APPEAR

嵐

嵐

YOU WERE THAT ..

!

I'M ISOZUKI NO NEZUMI.

ISOZUKI?

WHAT !?

I'M GOING TO TAKE THE TATSUMI CHICK THAT MY MASTER WISHES

AS I SUSPECTED, YOU'RE HIDING IT, AREN'T YOU?

shock

dash

!

WAIT!

looks up

UP THERE

HM?

SEEMS LIKE AN AYAKASHI CAME INTO THE HOUSE

YOU HAVE SOME GUTS TO ENTER MY TERRI-TORY

JUST SOME LOWLY BEAST.

THE BEST WEAPON AGAINST A SMALL MOUSE LIKE YOU IS MY CAT'S HOOK...

throw

rat

rat

HOW DARE YOU BE SO RUDE! I'M SO GOING TO EAT YOU, YOU MOUSE!

struggle

H-

struggle

WHAT IS THIS MASKED CREATURE? ...A PIG? OR IS IT A FOX?

THANKS FOR BUYING US SOME TIME! LEAVE THE REST TO ME!!

SFX SLAM

!!?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE SHOULD RUN TO

pant

pant

SORRY FOR THE ROUGH RIDE, TAMA. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

rustle

rustle

pant pant

rustle

I'M NOT BUYING YOU TIME!

WAIT UP, BOY!

come here and get free me! not us! me!

SFX. HUG TIGHT

rustle

TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG, TAMA.

YOU ARE SO THIN.

WHY WON'T YOU EAT YOUR FOOD...

...I SEE

YOU DON'T WANT TO GROW UP?

"IF YOU GROW UP"

hug tight

AM I RIGHT?

YOU WANTED TO BE TOGE-THER

"IT'LL LEAVE THE NEST"

hug

I WON'T HAND HIM OVER

I FOUND YOU, KID. HURRY UP AND HAND OVER THAT CHICK.

IF YOU WON'T HAND IT OVER, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT FORCEFULLY DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, POWER-LESS HUMAN CHILD?

IT'S ALREADY GROWN SO MUCH.

!

U.

URGH...

SFX: CRASH

struggle

TA-TAMA!? DON'T STRUG-GLE .

THE LIFE OF ONE AYAKASH SHOULD NOT MATTER TO YOU

HAND IT OVER

FROM THE BEGINNING, AYAKASHI ONLY BRING TROUBLE TO POW-ERLESS BEINGS.

hug

YOU CAN EAT PROPERLY. EVEN IF THE DAY FOR YOU TO LEAVE COMES,

YOU CAN STAY HERE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT IF YOU DON'T GO

IT'S ALL RIGHT, TAMA.

IT WON'T BE THE DAY WE SAY GOODBYE.

UNTIL THEN, YOU CAN STAY HERE.

NATSU -ME!

SFX: BLINDING LIGHT

appear

TA MA

Bite

LET HIM GO!

TAMA, STOP!

groan

STOP !!

TAMA !!

SFX: SNIFF

STAY AWAY FROM HIM, NATSUME HE'S LOST HIMSELF IN THE SHOCK OF THE SUDDEN GROWTH.

STOP IT! HE'S GOING TO DIE!

UR GH .

!

SFX: SNATCH

TSK

STOP IT, NA-TSU-ME .

IN THAT CASE, I HAVE TO CALM HIM DOWN

IF I HUG HIM, HE MAY REMEMBER

TA-MA..

SFX: APPEAR

TAMA

LET'S GO BACK

LET'S GO BACK

JUST LIKE A BIRD

YOU'RE AMAZING, TAMA

LISTEN TO ME, TAMA.

I WAS ALWAYS ALONE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MY REAL PARENTS LOOK LIKE.

I ALSO

I WAS VERY SAD.

BUT

THIS ...

MIGHT SOUND WEIRD.. BUT I WASN'T LONELY.

I MET PEOPLE WHO LOVED ME

ALTHOUGH I NOW UNDERSTAND THE LONELI-NESS OF DISTANCE

SINCE I CAME TO THIS TOWN

DESPITE THAT

FOR YOU, WHO KNEW WHAT BEING LONELY WAS, AND TRIED SO HARD TO LOVE

I HOPE THAT IT'S THE SAME FOR YOU, TAMA.

I'M NO LONGER SAD.

AFTER TAMA LETS US DOWN, HE CIRCLED THE FUJIWARA HOUSE SEVERAL ROUNDS

BEFORE FLYING OFF INTO THE DISTANT SKY

IF I HAD BEEN ABLE TO RELIEVE SOME OF THAT SADNESS.

IT WOULD BE GREAT

I'LL HUNT FOR ANOTHER NEW LIFE

TODAY, WHEN I GET BACK, I'LL TRY MAKING AN OMELETTE IN THE SHAPE OF A TAIYAKI.

IT'S NO MATTER. I'LL JUST LOOK AGAIN. SINCE ONE OF THE ADULTS HAS SET OFF, ONE DAY I'LL BE ABLE TO FIND ITS EGG.

FINE .. ADULTS ARE DELICIOUS BUT SO STRONG THAT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING. I'M GOING TO BE SCOLDED BY MY MASTER ..

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M SORRY FOR HIDING THE EGG FROM YOU.

HAVE SOME TAIYAKI.

AFTERWARDS, I PEEKED INTO THE NEST THAT TAMA LEFT BEHIND

EVEN IF I FAIL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WILL EAT THEM WITH A SMILE...

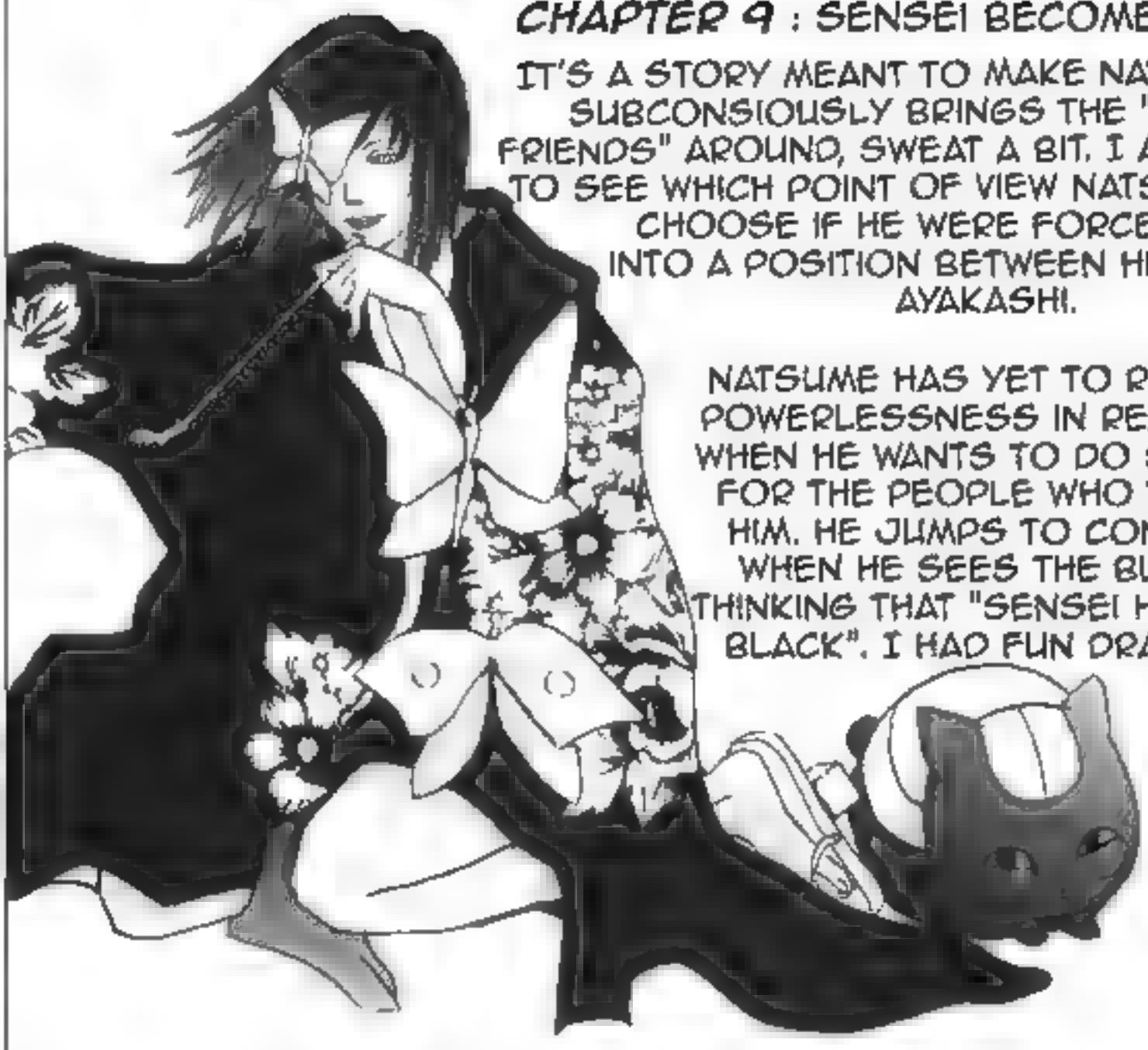
AS I EXPECTED, IT WAS EMPTY, BUT

AT THE BOTTOM, I FELT THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING I KNEW THAT HAD BEEN LEFT BEHIND.

NATSUME YUUJINCHOU VOLUME 3 / END

AFTERWORD

THANK YOU FOR READING. HOW WAS IT? "NATSUME YUUJINCHOU" HAS STEPPED INTO ITS THIRD VOLUME. I MEANT FOR EACH OF THE THREE VOLUMES TO BE SUITABLE AS STANDALONES AND I'D BE REALLY HAPPY IF YOU LIKE ANY ONE OF THEM. FROM THE REACTION TO VOLUME 1 AND 2, THERE WERE MORE SLAPSTICK STORIES IN VOLUME 3. I WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO FACE THE DIFFICULTY OF DRAWING SO MUCH ON ONE PARTICULAR TOPIC. I WAS GIVEN SOME EXTRA PAGES SO I WROTE A BIT ABOUT EACH STORY. THE FOLLOWING ARE SPOILERS SO PLEASE READ THEM ONLY AT THE END.



CHAPTER 9 : SENSEI BECOMES BLACK?

IT'S A STORY MEANT TO MAKE NATSUME, WHO SUBCONSIOUSLY BRINGS THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS" AROUND, SWEAT A BIT. I ALSO WANTED TO SEE WHICH POINT OF VIEW NATSUME WOULD CHOOSE IF HE WERE FORCEFULLY PUT INTO A POSITION BETWEEN HUMANS AND AYAKASHI.

NATSUME HAS YET TO REALIZE HIS POWERLESSNESS IN REALITY, EVEN WHEN HE WANTS TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE PEOPLE WHO THINK LIKE HIM. HE JUMPS TO CONCLUSION WHEN HE SEES THE BLACK CAT, THINKING THAT "SENSEI HAS TURNED BLACK". I HAD FUN DRAWING THE SLOW AND IRRITATING NATSUME. I WAS ALSO ABLE TO DRAW LOTS OF AYA-KASHI.

BECAUSE IT WAS THIS MAGAZINE, I DECIDED ON A LOVE STORY, AND BECAUSE IT WAS SUMMER, I DECIDED TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT FIREFLIES. JUST LIKE THE JINX ABOUT THE STORY TELLING ITSELF, IT WAS QUITE A ROUGH RIDE. BECAUSE IT WAS FOR 50 PAGES, I ACTUALLY WANTED TO INCLUDE ANOTHER TWIST, BUT MY EDITOR REMINDED ME THAT LOVE STORIES SHOULD NOT HAVE HALF-HEARTED DISTRACTIONS, I WAS ABLE TO FINISH THIS PROPERLY. AS I FELT THAT IT WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM THE NAME, I CHANGED THE SHOULDER-LENGTH HAIR OF THE FIREFLY TO CURLY IN THE FINAL DRAFT. IT WAS ALSO FUN CHANG-ING THE DESIGN OF THE AYA-KASHI IN THE LAKE TO A MORE GROTESQUE ONE. WHILE DRAWING THE SMALL GLOWING FIREFLY, I WAS REMINDED OF MY SCHOOL DAYS WHEN MY FRIEND JOKED ABOUT THE FIREFLIES LEADING YOU HOME IN THE DARK.

CHAPTER 10
THE LIGHT IN DARKNESS

CHAPTER 11 : THE MEETING OF THE SPELLCASTERS

I WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO DRAW A STORY ON NATORI-SAN AGAIN. I THOUGHT IT'D BE EASIER TO DRAW A STORY LINKING HAPPENINGS, BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, THE NUMBER OF EXPRESSIONS FELL AND I HAD TROUBLE DRAWING THEIR REACTIONS PROPERLY. THOUGH NATSUME WAS EXCITED AT MEETING OTHER PEOPLE LIKE HIM WHO COULD SEE AYAKASHI, HE COULD NOT TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND AYAKASHI. THE PEOPLE HE SAW WERE MOSTLY AYAKASHI INSTEAD. IT WAS ALSO FUN DRAWING A FEMALE CHARACTER, NANASE-SAN, AFTER SO LONG. EVEN THOUGH NATSUME SHOULD LEARN FROM NATORI AND TRY TO RELAX, IT WAS FUN DRAWING HOW TROUBLED HE WAS ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH AYAKASHI AND WHETHER HE CAN MAKE OTHER PEOPLE WITH POWERS UNDERSTAND HIM. I WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT REIKO-SAN, BUT IT WAS DIFFICULT SEPARATING THE STYLES OF DRAWING AND TALKING ABOUT HER.

CHAPTER 12 RAISING A CHICK

I WANTED TO CHALLENGE MYSELF TO WRITE A WARM AND FLUFFY STORY. EVEN THOUGH I WANTED TO DRAW NATSUME WARMING THE EGG, FOR SOME REASON, IT BECAME NYANKO-SENSEI DOING THE WARMING. AT FIRST, I WANTED TO DRAW THEM TAKING CARE OF A BIRD-LIKE CHICK, BUT IT WAS DIFFICULT EXPRESSING THE EMOTIONS, SO IN ORDER TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS MORE EASILY, TAMA-CHAN WAS BORN. THOUGH BOTH NATSUME (HINA-CHAN) AND NYANKO-SENSEI (TAMA-CHAN) HAVE NO NAMING SENSE, I SETTLED ON TAMA-CHAN. I DREW NEZUMI WITH THE INTENTION OF PORTRAYING IT AS A SERVANT CARRYING OUT ORDERS. EVEN THOUGH IT HAS POWERS, IT MET WITH BAD LUCK. I ALSO HAD FUN DRAWING NYANKO-SENSEI BEING DEFEATED BY NEZUMI BECAUSE OF IT'S LOVE FOR TAMA-CHAN. IT'S ALSO A STORY ABOUT HOW NATSUME WAS FINALLY ABLE TO SHARE ABOUT HIMSELF WITH ANOTHER.

NUMBER TWO

MIDDLE LEVEL YOUKAI
NUMBER ONE

SEARCHING FOR LOST ITEM
SASAGO

THE ACCURSED
UBIHIME

SPELLCASTER
HINOE

NATSUME LIST OF AYAKASHI AND FRIENDS

USER OF FROGS
PROTECTOR OF THE SWAMP
MISUZU

AMULET USER
PROTECTOR OF WAREHOUSE
HIIRAGI

THE SON OF THE YATSUHARA MONK
TANUMA KANAME

REIKO'S GRANDSON
NATSUME TAKASHI

EXORCIST
NATORI SHUUICHI

SELF-CLAIMED BODYGUARD
NYANKO-SENSEI

"NATSUME YUUJINCHOU" IS FULL OF GENTLE STORIES. AS AN AUTHOR, IT'S SOMETHING I PRODUCED WITH DRY IMPATIENCE, BUT I'M HAPPY BECAUSE IT IS SO STRAIGHTFORWARD. IT'S A MASTERPIECE FULL OF EMOTIONS AND MEMORIES. I WILL CONTINUE TO PRODUCE EACH VOLUME WITH INFINITE CARE FOR NATSUME'S DEVELOPMENT AND TRY TO SHOW THE EXPANSE OF THE WORLD.

THE YOUNG NATSUME IS SLOWLY BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUKAI, AND IN ORDER TO MAKE UP FOR ALL THE TIME HE'S BEEN ALONE, THERE'LL BE NEW MEETINGS. IN A DIFFERENT SENSE, HE WILL START TO REALIZE THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR DISTANCE.

ANYWAYS, I WILL TAKE GREAT CARE IN DRAWING THE DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN NATSUME AND NYANKO-SENSEI AND I HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO READ ON.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BUYING THIS VOLUME. I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AGAIN.

PLEASE SEND ALL COMMENTS TO:

〒101-0063

東京都千代田区

神田淡路町２－２－２

白泉社LaLa編集部

緑川ゆき

◎関人様達

大樹玉緒 さま

知華 さま

佐藤 さま

お姉 さま

ありがとうございました。

読んで頂きありがとうございました。

2006. 12. 緑川ゆき

AFTERWORD / END

Project Natsume Yuujinchou

Volume 03 Chapter 12

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